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VOL. 10.

BEHIND THE COUNTER BY F. W. HACKLÄNDER.

IN ONE VOLUME.

BEHIND THE COUNTER,

[HANDEL UND WANDEL]

BY

F. W. HACKLÄNDER.

FROM THE GERMAN

BY

MARY HOWITT.

Authorized Edition.

LEIPZIG 1868

BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ.

LONDON: SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON, SEARLE & RIVINGTON.

CROWN BUILDINGS, 188, FLEET STREET.

PARIS: C. REINWALD, 15, RUE DES SAINTS PÈRES.



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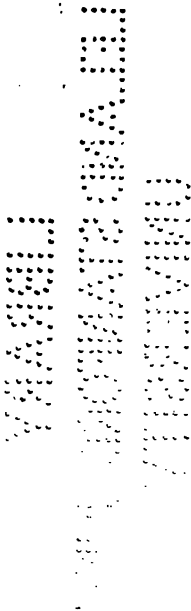
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BEHIND THE COUNTER.

CHAPTER I.

My Calling.

IN those days, to me so memorable, in which I left the school-bench and playground to become a link of that chain in which, under the name of business-life, the whole world struggles, vainly endeavouring to regain its lost freedom; — in those days I say, but small regard was paid to a science, of which, even now very little is known; the science by which the heads of people are manipulated and measured; by which it may be accurately ascertained what particular talents a man possesses, what abilities he ought to cultivate, and what calling in life he is best fitted for, so that in after years he need not have to deplore, like so many, that he has mistaken his vocation.

But even if it had then been possible to discover from the developments of my cranium, for what department of life I was most fitted, yet my circumstances would not have allowed me to go into any other business than that for which Providence and a certain want of money destined me.

My parents had long been dead, and I resided in the family and under the care of an aunt who was a widow and kept a little shop, in the business of which

I assisted whenever my leisure permitted. I was very expert in making paper-bags, and had even advanced to weighing out a pound of sugar or coffee when the time came for me to enter life on my own account.

My grandmother had also, at that time, taken up her abode under my aunt's roof. She was an excellent old lady, with whom, however, I was never on the best of terms.

I yet see her, in my mind's eye, sitting in her large, curiously carved arm-chair, on a striped cotton cushion, the cover of which she changed every Saturday evening at a certain hour. On a table, within her reach, lay a great number of old sermons which she had read through Heaven only knows how often, and upon them was placed the pair of silver spectacles which she used for this reading.

Her dress dated from the time of her youth, and was persisted in, partly out of a little vanity. She maintained that the costume of the present day was ugly and utterly devoid of taste, and when she became interested in this subject, and happened at the same time to be in a good humour, she would confide to me that in her younger days she had been reckoned handsome, and used to make a great figure in the world in the noble and becoming style of dress which then prevailed. And one could very well believe it, seeing how, at her present age, that of seventy, her countenance still preserved a dignified and beautiful expression, and that her lofty figure was still upright and commanding.

According to the antique mode she wore a hood on under which little curls made their appearance on the forehead and temples. Every article which she

had in daily use had its peculiar and interesting history, but which I had heard so frequently repeated that I knew it off by heart. The chair on which she sat had been discovered in the family, and was descended from I know not what remote ancestor. The silver spectacles, of which I have already spoken, had belonged to a French general, who during the war of the first revolution had been carried one evening, mortally wounded, into the parsonage — for she was the widow of a clergyman — where he died a few weeks afterwards.

This Frenchman must at first have been a dreadful heathen, for my grandmother used to tell how horribly he swore at everything; but she always added, not without pride, that in their quiet christian dwelling his heart soon became softened, and that he finally passed away in blessed peace. She also set immense value on a small gold snuff-box which she had likewise received, during the war-time, from a countess to whom her husband had rendered some essential service.

As already said, I did not always stand on the best footing with my grandmother. She could not bear the noise and the disturbances which I sometimes occasioned in the family; especially was it displeasing to her that I should be seen running about the streets and fields with boys of my own age. This often brought down upon me severe lectures, which mostly consisted of a string of proverbs.

"Here he comes," she would say, "one of the most determined in 'the company of Korah!' Will you never learn, you graceless lad, that evil communications corrupt good manners? Yes, I have often told you, he that makes himself green will be eaten by the

goats! The pitcher goes often to the well, but it gets broken at last! Bad beginning and bad ending!"

I was at that time a youth of the most slender physical build; smaller than most boys of my age, with a thin, pale countenance; in short, with somewhat of a miserable exterior, which was a thorn in the eye of my grandmother. She maintained that it came from my perpetually running and climbing about; from my going out in the rain without my cap, and from what she asserted was a real pleasure to me, getting my feet wet. She gave me the name of "the ghost," and made it a constant cause of lamentation that she had such a poor-looking grandson.

"Ah," said she, "it is truly written, 'By their fruit ye shall know them;' but my daughter, my Louisa, your mother — God grant she be happy! — was like me, a handsome, strong woman. As for you, you always seem to me like chaff amongst the wheat!"

Thus I lived, for half a year after my confirmation, with my aunt; and it was, on a Sunday afternoon, in the middle of winter, when a family council was held in my grandmother's room to decide what really was to be done with me. My grandmother, one of whose most beautiful tea-cups I had that morning broken, was of opinion indeed, as it was plain enough to see beforehand, that I should never turn out anything but a ne'er-do-weel. Nevertheless she and the rest must do their duty, that they might be able to wash their hands in innocence.

I myself was on this day in the most depressed state of mind possible. Out of doors the brooks and ponds were frozen, and my companions were all going forth to slide or skate. I also had gone out with a

pair of dilapidated skates, but was compelled to return without any enjoyment. In the past night a good deal of snow had fallen, and the ice was in consequence covered. Every pond was thus rendered useless, with one exception, on the banks of which a number of men stood, who, having cleared the ice, required for this service a small payment from every one who went upon it. But small as the sum required was, it was beyond my means, and disappointed and out of humour, I returned home resolutely determined that I would now, very soon, learn something really clever, that I might get my own money.

With this sentiment I entered my grandmother's room where I soon discovered to my great astonishment that they were all busily engaged in discussing my future.

Besides the aunt with whom I lived, there was also present another aunt now on a visit, and a letter of my guardian's, in which he had made known his will regarding me, lay upon the table, so that a complete family-council was met. A fourth person present, who had also a voice in the matter, was a good old body who had lived as housekeeper in my father's family, and had always been very indulgent to me. She had so great an affection for me, and was so tender-hearted that whenever she saw me in the street, or anywhere else, she burst into tears and lamented over my deceased father, who had been so early removed by death, whereby I had lost the opportunity of being excellently brought up. Now therefore, scarcely had I time to look round and find a place for myself by the stove, when she, glancing sorrowfully at me, her nose and mouth were agitated, and her

pocket-handkerchief drawn forth to wipe away the falling tears.

My grandmother, who was of a much more determined character, seeing this emotion, said:

"Now don't begin to cry, Miss Schmied. No harm will be done to the lad. Nothing injures weeds."

"Ah," sighed poor Miss Schmied; "if his poor father had only lived! then he might have studied and been a clergyman, like his late grandfather. That was what the dear gentleman always wished. But now he will have to stand in a shop and be a tradesman!"

Although my two aunts, however well-disposed they were towards me, had not made themselves uneasy respecting my future fate, yet under the representations of my sorrowful friend, it seemed to assume an importance which called for a few silent tears also from them. Their two pocket-handkerchiefs were brought forth at the same moment. Even my grandmother was touched, and pulled out hers from under the striped cotton cushion.

I must be forgiven if I confess that I too followed the general example. In the first place, the loss of the skating-pleasure, and secondly the uncertainty of the lot which lay before me, melted my heart into a condition of melancholy, so that when I heard the weeping of poor Schmied and saw the emotion of my relations, tears rolled down my cheeks almost before I was aware, falling upon the hot stove, hissed, as they were up.

My grandmother was the first to emerge, as it were, from this sea of sobs and tears, and set foot on dry ground. She took a pinch out of the countess's snuff-

box, placed the spectacles of the departed general on her nose, and admonished me to listen to her with the greatest attention. She then addressed to me a speech, interlarded with proverbs of all kinds, and in which, after an immense amount of good advice and admonition, she said that besides the necessity common to all men of fitting themselves for heaven, it was also the duty of each individual to choose for himself some especial calling or business by which to earn his daily bread.

"The choice of a vocation," continued she, after a pause, "our dear Lord has not made difficult in your case; because from the want of a certain necessary, which people call money, nothing beyond trade is open to you. But which particular branch of trade you may choose, which is most according to your taste, is —"

"Yes," said my eldest aunt, taking up the unfinished sentence, "you can at all events decide on this point; you can choose that for which you have most inclination and natural fitness."

I might decide upon that for which I had the most aptitude, yet I could not say that I felt more aptitude for one calling than for another. My experience was of this kind. If I saw a painter at work I felt the artist within me, and believed it would not be difficult for me to succeed in his brilliant career. If, on the other hand, I saw a student in his short velvet coat, white cap, and long pipe with its bright-coloured tassels, I was convinced that I could make just as good a figure, and become a most capital student. It was just the same when I was in the public courts of justice and heard the lawyers pleading, or when on Sundays

I saw on parade the officers walking about all tricked out in their uniform. Fortunately also even trade had its attractive side in this ideal view of things.

Sitting on a high stool in a counting-house, however, was not agreeable, and standing behind a counter was intolerable to me. But shopkeeping, as I saw it in our town, was, according to my childish imagination, only one of the very lowest steps of mercantile life, and I believed that I had only to ascend to a higher stand-point when trade would assume a very different aspect. In this view of the subject I saw nothing less than the commerce of some sea-port town with which I had become acquainted in my geographical school-studies. Here I fancied myself seated at my desk close to the shore, receiving ships and their cargoes at first hand, and hearing the sailors relate beautiful stories about life amongst the savages and the Hottentots.

My grandmother now enumerated the different kinds of trades, and my eldest aunt stated clearly to me the pros and cons of each. First there was the weaver. But this calling I rejected from the first, because he must always stand glued, as it were, behind his machine. Next came the merchant's clerk, but that also I decided against, because he must be for ever hanging his head over his ledgers, whilst as regarded the wares or goods themselves, which, by their peculiar fragrance and their strange outlandish packing, reminded me so delightfully of the foreign countries whence they had been shipped, he so very rarely, if ever, came into contact with them. Businesses connected with exchange were especially repugnant to me, and that owing to peculiar experience of my own. I had at one time formed a most tender friendship with the son of a

money-dealer, who, however, sacrificed me in favour of another boy of my own age, because he wore a better coat than I did, and was richer and of a better family than myself. My grandmother, to whom, at the time, I related this sorrowful experience, replied to me according to her usual mode:

"He who has much money in his purse has a cold and facile heart."

I fixed that proverb in my memory, and determined never to be a money-dealer, and never to have so much money as to make my heart facile and cold.

Thus after all these various callings had been passed in review before me and rejected, there remained only one for which my relatives unanimously declared, and that principally because it would be the least expensive in learning — namely, that I should be apprenticed to the grocery-business, which might be called commerce in its smallest beginning.

I was not disinclined for the proposal, which was a great satisfaction to the family-council, with the exception of poor Miss Schmied, whose tears now flowed with renewed plenteousness.

"Ah," deplored she, "now the poor lad must be a tradesman and not brought up to the church as his poor father wished! Ah, you, who were yourself the wife of a clergyman," said she, turning to my grandmother, "should be of a different mind. Yes, dear lady, and during the whole of his childhood I observed his natural impulses, and nothing shall ever persuade me that he was not born to be a clergyman. You should have seen him on a Sunday afternoon, when it was wet, and he was forced to stay indoors to play

with the other children. Only think, dear lady, how he would get one of my black silk aprons, and make me cut him a band such as the clergy wear — so long — of white paper — and then he'd set himself up on two chairs, like a pulpit, and preach to the other children, just as if he were in the church — you know how — firstly and secondly! Ah, it was so beautiful!"

Poor Schmied might have seduced me again into weeping with her, had not my grandmother said, with somewhat of severity:

"Do be rational, Miss Schmied! One must not excite a child's desire for that to which he can never attain. It would be much better if you told him about what is attractive in a shopkeeper's life."

"It is no use my denying," said the poor old soul, with a sigh, "that I would much rather see my darling in a pulpit than behind a counter. But the will of the Lord be done!"

Poor old Schmied, who really was the best creature in the world, acquiesced with great tact, and very shortly assured the ladies in council that I was, without exception, one of the most sensible of lads, and that I had talent for anything.

"Ah," said she, smiling through her tears, like the sun on an April-day, "when he is once settled to his tradesman life, he will certainly be an excellent correspondent. Only think, my dear lady, there was old Fritz, the letter-carrier — he is long since dead and buried, God be merciful to his soul! — he brought your late husband, the blessed clergyman, his letters, and then that little lad of ours, he too must have his letters, so what did he do, but get bits of paper and

made them up into letters, and gave them to old Fritz, who was to take them with the others; and then you should have seen his delight when the next day the old man brought them back and he received them as answers. Then he would put on my spectacles and read through his letters, just like his blessed grandfather, shaking his head all the while and laughing. Goodness me! it was the drollest thing in the world!"

Thus it was decided in the family-council, and assented to by myself, that I should commence my shopkeeper career in the grocery-line. I had already to a certain degree studied and comprehended the elementary part of this business with my aunt, therefore it would not be so difficult to make me into a clever tradesman of this kind.

One reason which induced my family to devote me to this branch of trade was, independently of the money consideration, the probability that a situation might be found for me in the town where we lived, so that I need not be removed far from my relations.

My grandmother, therefore, immediately ordered the local paper, that she might ascertain if amongst the advertisements which it contained, any would suit our purpose. There were a great number, but all accompanied by conditions which were not accordant with my circumstances. For instance, one apprentice advertised for "would obtain board and lodging with his principal, in consideration of which an equivalent in money would be required." Or the same thing in other words, thus, "a certain sum yearly as an apprentice-fee would be required, in return for which the youth would be provided with board and lodging."

The family-council sought day after day for an

advertisement unattended by these unpleasant conditions, but in vain, and therefore came to the unanimous conclusion that they themselves would advertise, and, commending me to the Christian compassion of the grocer-public, offer me as an apprentice. For this purpose my grandmother laid a sheet of paper before her, pointed a pen, and commenced to write, whilst poor Schmied stood behind looking over her shoulder with her pocket-handkerchief in her hand, for her foreboding heart already told her that she would soon have occasion to shed some bitter tears over my fate. And of a truth, scarcely had my grandmother written many words when her features became agitated, and, shaking her head, she said, with her eyes full of tears:

"But, my dear lady, the poor lad is not a subject —"

I pricked up my ears at once, and even my aunts looked inquiringly at my grandmother as Schmied made this remark. But the old lady wrote on, without regarding any one, until she had finished; then she took the paper in her hand and read aloud:

"A young subject of good family, without property, yet furnished with the necessary preparatory knowledge, is in search of a situation with a grocer, in order to learn the business. He can, however, offer only a very small remuneration for board and lodging, which he must receive in the house of his employer."

I heard this quietly to the end. Then I also put in my say, and remarked somewhat earnestly to my grandmother, that as it appeared to me I was not really, after all, a *subject*, and that I had never heard the term otherwise used than as applicable to a school-

master's-assistant, of whom it is said, when seeking for a situation, that he is qualified for such and such *subjects*.

Schmied, without saying a word, nodded approvingly at me, and even my aunts objected to the word *subject*, and at length induced my grandmother to alter it, and to say instead, "A youth of good family," &c.

I was next required to copy this composition carefully and carry it myself to the newspaper-office. I copied it accordingly, and, taking my cap from the wall, went out.

Poor Schmied, whose sensitive heart now saw of a truth that the moment was approaching in which I must begin my life for good or for evil, hastened after me, and weeping pressed me to her heart, thrusting into my hand at the same time a silver groschen, which, whilst I gratefully accepted, affected me so profoundly that I was very much nearer tears than laughter.

At this she was still more deeply moved, and as I went down the steps I heard her saying with sobs, that I was the best child in the world, and that the talent which I possessed for everything would enable me, even in a retail shop, to make a distinguished figure.

CHAPTER II.

Mr. Reismehl.

My first business on the morning which succeeded this remarkable day was to fetch the newspaper, that we might see whether the advertisement which my grandmother had drawn up respecting me, was inserted.

Of a truth, there it stood, legibly and beautifully, a square advertisement inclosed with a black line. I felt myself considerably edified by seeing something about myself in print.

After a few days the advertisement began to operate, and a number of letters were sent to us from the newspaper-office, addressed to the initials which had been given.

My grandmother, who evidently was pleased by this result, opened one letter after another, but always after reading them looked disappointed; for there was not one of these which did not state conditions with which it was impossible that we could comply. For instance, in one case, the letter said, "With regard to the advertisement 10, in to-day's paper, No. 220, inserted under the initials H. H., the writer of this letter inquires if the youth referred to be of a strong physical frame, as any one whom we might take into our service would be required to help in cleaning out the shop."

Another epistle, after a similar introduction, said:

"As I unite with my grocery and drug business the agency of our widely circulated local paper, 'the

Intelligencer,' it would be a part of the duties of the youth whom I should take into my service to deliver, twice a week, this paper at the houses of such as take it in regularly."

A third, who seemed somewhat prepossessed in my favour, inquired if I could be trusted to go out with children, as in the large family of the writer, it was necessary that the apprentice in his leisure hours, and after eight o'clock, should be so employed; that he ought to be fond of children and have a pleasure in their society, as he would have the elder children to care for and to amuse in all kinds of rational ways."

A fourth, who wrote in a sanctified style, inquired whether the proposed youth were of an unquestionably christian character." To him my grandmother would have replied satisfactorily, had not he demanded an unusually large sum for board and lodging.

Thus nothing suitable offered for me in this direction, and although my grandmother endeavoured to console herself by the reflection that every beginning was difficult, and that no tree fell from the first blow, yet she was evidently greatly annoyed by the unfavourable prospect, and maintained more resolutely than ever that I was a young ne'er-do-weel upon whom the blessing of the Lord did not rest.

The unsuccessful result of these attempts was all the more annoying to me, as I had already severed myself from my former school-associates with a certain degree of pride, and had begun to treat them with that patronising air which the prospective man of business assumes when he has thrown off the garb of the boy.

Just then, however, late as it was, another letter came, in answer to the advertisement. My grandmother

hastily opened and read it through with great satisfaction. It was from Mr. Reissmehl, the proprietor of a middle-class grocery-business, a person with whom my family were acquainted, and whose proposal included no unacceptable conditions. True, the term of my apprenticeship was to last for five years, but for this I was to be boarded and lodged in his house, free of all cost. Mr. Reissmehl also assured us that his apprentices were employed solely in the business of the shop, and not, as in so many other businesses, in services which were not at all suited for them.

I knew Mr. Reissmehl exceedingly well, and did not really deserve all this acceptable consideration at his hands. The dwelling which he inhabited adjoined our school-house, and his garden ran alongside of our playground. A tolerably high wall separated them, and not all the admonitions and threats of our teachers could prevent us, lads, from playing our old neighbour all kinds of roguish tricks. But nobody who had seen his queer figure would have been very angry with us, nor yet surprised, that the very sight of him excited us to mischief.

Our school opened in summer at seven o'clock in the morning, and a number of us usually were in the playground half an hour earlier to be ready for the expected appearance of our neighbour, who, regularly as clock-work, entered his garden a quarter before seven to ascertain, as it seemed to us, exactly how much his plants and vegetables had grown during the night. He was then dressed in full costume, his thin little figure adorned in the most extraordinary manner. His eager, pointed countenance was seen under a foxy own wig, on the top of which a little round hat was

placed so forward that the front rim seemed to be exactly on a line with the toes of his shoes. He was attired in a brown coat, ditto waistcoat, black breeches and white stockings.

Immediately on entering the garden he walked with calm, regular steps up to an ancient sun-dial which stood in one corner, and drawing forth, with many grimaces, and as if with immense difficulty, a thick, round silver watch, which was hung to a steel chain, compared its time with that of the old sun-dial, and regulated it accordingly. This important duty performed, he took out his snuff-box, tapped the lid thoughtfully, then took a pinch, gazing on all around him with great satisfaction.

So far, however, the whole thing was not so remarkably curious or amusing to us observant school-boys. But when the old gentleman had taken his pinch of snuff, he began his circuit round the garden, which we followed with the most exact attention, although, or rather perhaps for that very cause, we knew everything which would then occur, even to the most insignificant particular. The finger of the clock could not, day by day, move with more exact regularity round the dial-plate than our neighbour round his garden.

Near the sun-dial stood a large pear-tree, before which the old gentleman stationed himself. First he gazed up into the tree, then he struck the stem with the flat of his hand three blows. This duty performed he walked straight on to a row of young fruit-trees, every one of which he touched in succession with his hand. If by any chance, however, he passed one over, he was sure to turn back, and then the poor,

neglected tree received a still more affectionate hand-caress. It was this very chance for which especially we waited in our corner of the playground-wall, and whenever the old gentleman passed over a tree, or even a portion of the trellis which he was accustomed to touch every morning in the same manner, we shouted out, laughing aloud, and as merry as imps, "would he only be so very obliging as to turn back again."

These promenades through the garden continued perhaps for a quarter of an hour, during which, as I have already said, he made every morning precisely the same movements, remained standing by the same flower-beds and trees, and always touching with his hand the very same spots on the espaliers as well as on the garden-fence.

The old gentleman, however, was very far from appearing affronted by our fun and our shouting to him; on the contrary, he generally turned round on such occasions, not unfrequently smiling at us, and nodding with his thin pale countenance in the most friendly manner. Nevertheless there was a something so strange in his smile, that the lesser boys leapt down from the wall into the playground, so terrified were they whenever old Reissmehl looked at us with that kindly, but unaccountable expression.

Towards seven o'clock, having brought his promenade to an end, he turned to the house, where, in the meantime, one shutter of a window which looked into the garden was opened, and the sister of our old neighbour, Miss Reissmehl, made her appearance. Her intentions had reference to a flannel night-jacket which, having carefully shaken, she hung out in the sun; after which, casting a searching glance over the garden.

she withdrew, and the next minute the garden-door opened from within, and out came a fat poodle that, with no little trouble waddled into the garden to salute its master with a weak whining and barking.

Just at this time our school-bell usually sounded; but we had now seen all that took place in our neighbour's garden; for after the old poodle had inhaled a few mouthfuls of fresh air, and taken its regular and stated walk, it waddled back into the house, accompanied by Mr. Reissmehl, who went in also to drink his morning-cup of coffee. In mounting the door-steps, however, he never failed to touch his flannel-jacket in four places, seized and turned the door-handle with both hands, opened it and walked into the house, after, according to his invariable custom, he had coughed a few times.

This very same Mr. Reissmehl then it was, who now, in reply to my grandmother's advertisement, declared himself ready, under certain very unexceptionable conditions, to instruct me in the practical and theoretical duties of a tradesman. My grandmother, who had called together the family-council for the discussion of this important question, was very much in favour of our school-neighbour, so also my aunt, nor, as far as I myself was concerned, had I anything against him. Indeed however much I and my companions might have given him reason for offence, yet so far had he always shown himself from taking it, that when we rushed out of school, and he happened to be standing at his shop-door, he gave us innumerable proofs of his goodwill and kindness by throwing out whole handfuls of almonds and raisins and dried plums for us to scramble for.

There was one person, however, who did not regard the prospect in an attractive light, this was poor Miss Schmied. Although she made the most violent efforts to keep her composure, she could not prevent a few tears from rolling down her cheeks. She shook her head sorrowfully whilst my grandmother was setting forth in systematic order the advantages of Mr. Reissmehl's proposal, without once venturing to interrupt the old lady; nor was it until she had ended, and the family-council had about half and half fallen into her views, that she attempted to counteract the project by a few feeble words.

"Ah, my dear lady, and you a clergyman's widow!" said she, "And may God forgive me if I venture to speak a word against my fellow-creatures. But people do whisper such strange things about old Reissmehl, nay —"

"Well, what do they say?" interrupted my grandmother, somewhat gruffly.

"Ah, my good lady!" said she, "you would not believe anything of the sort; and I for my part, no indeed! I would not actually swear to it, but they do say that old Reissmehl must have something on his mind, because he can't rest, but goes wandering up and down his house, feeling at everything as if he wanted to find something. — In short, my dear lady, it is not right."

"Yes, grandmother," added I, in a tone of precocious wisdom, "he does go all about, feeling at everything. That I myself have often seen."

But my grandmother pronounced all this "stupid nonsense," and without any delay wrote, with her own hand, a christian letter, as she termed it, to Mr. Reiss-

mehl, in which she mentioned to him various particulars regarding my apprenticeship; and as the old gentleman replied the same day, assenting to all her views, nothing remained but that I should become his apprentice, and the very next day enter upon my duties.

My aunt packed my small stock of linen and clothes in a small box; my grandmother gave me a copy of the Bible, a couple of hymn-books, and a number of unbound sermons; and, at the moment when I was leaving my old home to take my first step into business-life, poor old Schmied met me at the house-door, and, with a very woful countenance, presented me with a pair of dark-coloured linen-sleeves which she had made on purpose for me, praying me, at the same time, never to forget her.

I went alone and very thoughtfully through the streets, and soon stood before Reissmehl's shop, where I remained stationary, and looked up with a deep sigh to the school-house adjoining, where I had spent so many sweet and painful hours.

Although I cannot confess that I entered upon my business-career with great hopes, yet these two houses appeared to me like the image of the past and the future. The low, but newly-built and pleasant-looking school-house, with its bright large windows, had never before looked so home-like as on this very morning when I must pass by the open door and enter the next house, which had an appearance so altogether different; so gloomy and yet so imposing.

It was one of those houses, of which there are many in old towns, tall and narrow, with small, irregular windows, which are placed in such jumbled

disorder that, from the outside, it is impossible to say how many storeys there are. The gable-end, which was turned to the street, had the top of its pyramid crowned with a carved wooden figure, the head of which however was gone. The lower storey was occupied by the shop, before the entrance to which stood an ancient rough-hewn stone figure representing a gigantic soldier or journeyman of the middle ages, who was, singularly enough, furnished with an immensely long nose. The nose of this stone figure had hitherto no little amused us. How often had it been coloured by some of the boldest amongst us with red, yellow, or green paint; and how many a ball of clay had we stuck on it, or played it some other trick of the same kind! It had moreover become as bright as a looking-glass with all our rubbing and handling, and could be seen shining out at a great distance.

My heart felt quite heavy as I stood there between the two houses, and whenever I made a step forward towards the house of old Reissmehl, I seemed forcibly pulled back again by the noise and humming sound of voices in the school-room, for my old companions were just beginning their singing-lesson, and I could do no other than listen to them.

I saw how they all rose up from their benches, how they took their little song-books in their hands, out of which I, too, had sung hundreds of times, and as they struck up the old well-known song,

It comes the winter season
The winter with all his snow

a sense of sadness so strongly overcame me that I felt very much like poor old Miss Schmied.

Here I seemed to stand between the two houses,

a poor forlorn child; there was the school — but both with it and its beloved playground I had no longer either art or part; and here, life in the shop beckoned me forward with a grave and gloomy aspect. The old stone figure seemed to me now for the first time to assume a very quizzical expression, and the winter-sun laughed and sparkled in his shining nose.

Yet I was glad that it was only the winter-sun which beheld between dreary snow-clouds the changing character of my life. Yes, of this I was heartily glad, for if my comrades within the school-walls had been singing —

The spring-time is beginning
With sunshine and all its flowers,

how much heavier would my heart have been; and who knows if I should not have run back to my grandmother and declared to her with tears, that I neither would nor could live in that gloomy house with old Mr. Reissmehl. In my distress of mind I might even have told a lie and said,

“Yes, grandmother, the stone figure at the house-door has told me that what Miss Schmied says is true; things are neither right nor comfortable in that house!”

But just at this moment the singing ceased in the school. I heard the voice of the master admonishing the boys to go home in an orderly manner and without noise; then the books were slapped down; I heard the clattering of the slates, and that I might not be seen by my former companions just at the moment when I took my first step into a life of trade, I turned quickly away and entered the shop of Mr. Reissmehl.

CHAPTER III.

Phillip.

I ENTERED the shop of Mr. Reissmehl.

Who does not remember from the days of his childhood the shop in which sugar-candy, almonds and raisins, and such like delicacies were purchased? Who cannot recall the time when with the acquired wealth of a few pence he stood before the counter, and, giving the reins to his desires, asked for sugar-candy or dried plums? With what greedy, covetous eyes he then gazed into the receptacles which contained these articles, and wished for nothing more earnestly than that he was able to live in confidential intercourse with those boxes and drawers, and so be able to enjoy their contents as often as he desired!

Foolish wishes! They indeed become changed by years, but they never leave us. I, however, on that particular morning when I entered the shop of my future master, did not think of the sweet contents of the various drawers and slides. No. I wished with earnest longing that the time were come in which I, an accomplished tradesman, should be able to leave this shop to enter upon a life which would hasten me to a sea-port town, with its infinite expanse of ocean and its forest of masts.

I was not, however, able to indulge these dreams for long. Mr. Reissmehl, who had already become aware of my presence, walked forth from a little glass-door over which was written in golden letters the word "counting-house." His thin face had just the same

friendly, smiling expression as that with which he received our jests in the garden; he, however, wore a white night-cap, instead of the high-crowned hat, and, in place of the brown coat a round short jacket. His arms from the wrist to the elbow were encased in a pair of dark-coloured cotton sleeves, the underside of which was very shiny. The good man also wore his spectacles low on his nose, but which on entering the shop he raised close to his eyes.

As is very possible in such cases, I had never once heard Mr. Reissmehl speak a word, although I had seen him hundreds of times, so that for anything I knew to the contrary he might not possess the noble gift of speech; and I, in fact, seemed almost to think of him as dumb. Neither on this particular morning was I immediately undeceived, for he gazed at me for some time through his spectacles, nodded a few times in a friendly manner, and then glanced along the counter, where his eye became rivetted on a little wet spot. He walked up to it, dipped his finger into the liquid, then lifted it to his nose as if to ascertain by means of the organ of smell what it really was. Immediately on doing so he fixed his glance so firmly upon it that his eye seemed set; after that he touched his tongue with his finger, thus bringing the organ of taste to his assistance.

"Ei, ei, so, so!" murmured he to himself, and I, hearing him thus speak, seemed regularly astonished. "Hm, hm! double distilled corn-brandy, of six-and-twenty degrees! It ought not to be thus carelessly spilled about! Heigh! Phillip!"

After this, he turned round, and thus addressed me:

"Aha, my dear lad! Very nice indeed that you are come to-day; but your grandmother, the good lady, did not probably mention to you the hour I fixed. I begged her, the worthy lady, to send you about twelve o'clock. It is, however, by my —" and so saying he seized hold of the long steel chain and drew forth his round turnip-like watch — "it is by my watch already five minutes past twelve; five minutes! Ay, ay! — Heigh, Phillip!" shouted he now into the house, "where can you have hidden yourself?"

The person thus summoned made his appearance with long strides, and presented such a form and such a grave and solemn countenance that, had it not been noonday, I might have imagined Mr. Reissmehl had summoned a ghost.

Phillip, so the apparition was called, was a tall young man, who looked considerably taller than he really was, from his remarkable leanness. He had light-coloured, almost yellow hair, parted along the middle and brushed down each side of the head, so stiff and so straight that at a distance it bore no inconsiderable resemblance to new thatch. Whether it were that this style was not suited to his countenance, or that its solemn, grave expression did not accord with the long-limbed slovenly figure, I cannot say, but the whole produced an unspeakably comic effect.

Such was the appearance which Phillip, my colleague and my superior, presented as he entered the shop; and, by-the-bye, I ought to have mentioned that his arms were so long that he could have loosened his knee-buckles without stooping, if he had worn such appendages.

"Phillip," said the old gentleman, "why is the

counter always spilled over with brandy? I will not allow it! Have I not provided all kinds of cloths and sponges to clean away messes of this kind? Yes, the wood may well look dirty and the excellent six-and-twenty brandy be wasted."

Phillip bowed his head towards his left shoulder, probably in humility, or to prevent his principal having the trouble of looking up into his face, seeing that he was so much the taller of the two, and then replied in a low voice and with a deliberation such as I had never before heard:

"It is only an accident, master. Just as I was measuring out the brandy I heard the little dog crying in the house, so I ran in to see what was the matter."

"Ei, ei, so, so!" interrupted the old gentle nan, "What was amiss with poor Fanny?"

"Oh nothing, master," replied Phillip, "she was lying in the window in the sun, and a cloud came over the sky and made it dull, and that vexed the poor beast."

"Well, well," returned Mr. Reissmehl, "let her be; the sun will soon come out again. Here is our new apprentice," continued he, pointing towards me; "I hope, Phillip, you will take to him kindly, and make him by degrees acquainted with everything."

On this Phillip raised his head for a moment to look at me from the distance where I stood, after which he dropped it towards his right shoulder, and assured his principal that he would do the utmost in his power to give me the necessary instruction.

This said, Mr. Reissmehl returned to the counting-house, and I followed my new instructor into the shop-parlour, where he at once commenced his instruction.

I was told to put on a pair of sleeves, and, as I have said, poor Miss Schmied had furnished me with a pair of her own making; I did so, after which Phillip gave me a green apron to tie round my waist. Thus attired, I thought in a most lively manner of that good old soul, poor Schmied, and wondered what she would have said could she have beheld me.

The first instruction which Phillip gave me was in the noble and necessary business of paper-bag making, and as I had practised this initiatory step already with my aunt, it proceeded rapidly and satisfactorily. I quickly perceived the various sizes and forms which were in use in Reissmehl's shop, and as the principal came into the back-parlour at one o'clock to inquire after his dinner, he was evidently pleased with my apparently rapid progress, and gave it as his opinion that I should soon become acquainted with the practical part of the business.

At the dinner-table I was introduced to the third member of the family, the sister of our principal, Miss Barbara Reissmehl, whom I already knew from her daily appearance at the garden-window. This worthy lady had passed the bloom of youth, and retained but little of the freshness or agility of her earlier years, unless it were in the activity of her tongue, which was astonishing.

She was extremely amiable towards me on this occasion, and whilst taking her soup told me about my grandmother and all my aunts, and of a great many other persons who served as living figures in these histories. My master, on the contrary, was silent in the highest degree, which did not give me any bad idea of his understanding, nor yet of his good

will towards me. If he had been as loquacious as his sister, it would have rendered it extremely difficult for me to have swallowed a morsel, because good manners required that when she came to any important portion of her narration, which alas occurred very frequently, we should lay down our knives and forks, and give her our best attention. Phillip, at all events, did so, and sat nearly half the dinner-time listening attentively, with his mouth open, a mode of behaviour which had evidently established him firmly in Miss Barbara's good graces. I, however, am to this day of opinion, that this was the cause of his increasing meagreness.

When dinner was ended, Phillip wished his principal and Miss Barbara a good digestion; I did the same, and then we withdrew. The afternoon was employed in my still farther initiation into the practical details of business. Amongst many other beautiful and useful things, I learned, for instance, how to measure out oil and vinegar, but still was not able at once to acquire the bold and expert manipulation of Phillip, whereby the dripping overflow of the measure was poured again into the trough. He also taught me how coffee, sugar, &c. was weighed, without wronging either the customer or the dealer.

While this lesson was in progress, my instructor all at once disappeared into the adjoining room where we had dined. After a little while I heard there the voice of Miss Reissmehl speaking in an undertone, and my quick, accustomed senses recognised the clatter of cups and saucers, together with a fragrant odour that excited a pleasant hope of coffee being in preparation, but which, as far as I was concerned at least, was not

fulfilled. Phillip, on the contrary, appeared to have paid a coffee-visit to Miss Barbara; nor, although on his return to the shop, he appeared scrupulously to have wiped away from his mouth, with the upper and unsoiled portion of his sleeve, every outward trace, could he remove the unquestionable odour of the delicious beverage which he brought with him.

This neglect naturally annoyed me, for it seemed to me that I ought, on this day, to have been regarded as a guest. But then I observed, to my great astonishment, that neither had my good master been invited to coffee any more than myself; and still more was I astonished when somewhat later, he looked into the parlour, and, inquiring if coffee were not ready, was told by his sister that she had not time to make any that day.

Alas! very strange ideas arose in my mind, and whilst I at once recognised Miss Barbara as being a very important person, I could not, after this circumstance, help looking up to Phillip. What an enormous amount of talent and knowledge he must possess when he was so much preferred before the principal.

In the evening, towards eight o'clock, Mr. Reissmehl took off his sleeves and jacket, which he hung upon a large nail behind his desk. His night-cap he set upon the head of a little stone monster which stood upon the stove, and the cheek of which he patted. This done, he locked up the counting-house, attired himself exactly in his morning garden-costume, set his hat forward on his head, and completed his toilet by a Spanish walking-cane with a silver knob. Then bidding Miss Barbara good-night, and casting a searching glance round the shop, closed here and there a drawer which

was a little open, or brought forward a jar which was shoved too far back. In passing me he looked at me fixedly for a moment through his spectacles, nodded and inquired how I liked the business.

Having reached the shop-door, he remained standing for a moment, and called the poodle, the fat little Fanny, which on this summons came waddling forth, and having accompanied her master to the front of the house, turned round and came back again.

Phillip gave me several pewter oil-measures to clean, and whilst I was busied so doing he disappeared into the adjoining room, whence he emerged at about nine o'clock, in order to give me instructions as to closing the shop-shutters.

This done, he lighted a large brass lamp, and we mounted up-stairs; but not, however, until I had taken a frugal supper of bread-and-butter and a glass of beer, which was brought into the shop for me.

CHAPTER IV.

A Neighbour.

THE house of the Reissmehls was quite as uncomfortable and as gloomy inside, as it appeared from the street. Scarcely any two chambers lay on the same level. The various rooms were reached and connected by numbers of small stairs which led, some up and some down. These stairs were very old, of brown, worm-eaten wood with carved balustrades, and creaked and cracked at every step you took. On each fresh landing or turn in the stairs you came upon such strange carved wooden figures, which seemed now to be laughing and

now grinning at you, that it would have been no wonder if I, now going up for the first time by that flickering lamp-light, had fancied they were alive and in motion. Another thing which still more increased the strangely dismal character of the place was, that every moment almost you came upon little round or angular windows opening from chambers upon the staircase, and which now by lamp-light looked like darkly-gleaming eyes.

I must confess that I was somewhat frightened. I could not help thinking of the stone figure outside with the long nose, and I do not know how it was that the mad idea came into my mind, and which persecuted me the whole night in dreams, that these wooden figures in a midnight quarrel had driven the stone figure, which had also once had a place inside, out into the street.

Phillip hurried up the first flight of stairs, past the rooms of the first storey, and in reply to my question regarding them said, that they were very rarely used. Through the second storey he passed more leisurely, pointing out to me the sleeping-room of our principal and that of Miss Barbara. The third storey was reached by an old winding staircase, and here our chambers were situated. These two rooms had originally been one, and were now divided by a wooden partition. A bed stood in each; mine against the outer wall, so that the sloping roof hung over it.

The builder of this house must assuredly have had a great passion for carved and decorative work, for even the very beams of the roof were chiselled and painted; and at each junction with the wall you were met by a grotesque head, either of man or beast, which

now seemed to be laughing and grinning above my bed. Opposite the bed's foot was a window opening into the narrow space which lay between our house and the next, an interval of space only one yard wide, but proportionably deep as the two houses were equally high. This space formed below a narrow passage or thoroughfare between two streets. Exactly opposite to this window opened another in the neighbour-house, which though somewhat lower, yet was so close that nothing could be easier than to reach the hand across.

The first chamber, that in which Phillip slept, was furnished with a small stove, and here he at once set about to light a fire, which, owing to the size of the room, produced about the same effect as the meagre bread-and-butter supper in my hungry stomach; nevertheless we drew each of us a chair as close as possible to the stove and began a little conversation, in which Phillip endeavoured to give me a general idea of trade. He spoke principally of selling for ready money, but came at length to credit under particular circumstances, assuring me that it was in the last degree difficult to carry on the one without the other, and doubly difficult to observe the right medium between the two.

Whilst we were in the midst of this interesting conversation, we were suddenly interrupted by a strange sound before my window. It might have been taken for a kind of song, at the same time that it somewhat resembled the howling of a dog. I listened and looked inquiringly at my companion, who with an uneasy and annoyed countenance replied in a very mournful voice:

"Ah! that's our neighbour Dr. Burbus, who is just now come home!"

"Dr. Burbus?" I asked, "and who is he?"

"Oh," replied Phillip, anxiously, "you'll soon know him — soon know him. Do you hear?"

There was a knocking now at the window, and at the same time a deep bass voice called out with great joviality:

"Heigh! Mr. Phillip — young, long-legged individual! Commercial genius!"

Again there was a still louder knocking, and then a still more distinct summons:

"Open your long ears, you knight of the rueful countenance!"

Phillip was now on his legs, and in reply to my question, "What in all the world does this mean?" shrugged his shoulders almost up to his ears, and went into the adjoining chamber, where he quietly opened the window at my bed's foot.

"Good evening, Doctor Burbus!" said he.

"*Herr* Doctor Burbus!" replied the voice, "I have told you that already a thousand times!"

"What do you want, *Herr* Doctor Burbus?" asked Phillip, meekly.

"Beloved youth!" replied the bass voice, now more kindly, "you would make me very happy by a small loan of wood and a little coal. It's horribly cold, and I forgot this morning to tell the girl — I gave her a great deal more money than was needed to get these things — and she has forgotten. — See, here's my bag! Do oblige me by filling it."

With these words something was heard to fall on the floor of my room, and Phillip the next moment

returned with a sack in his hand, which was so black that it was easy to perceive that it had been put to this service many a time before to-night. My colleague bent down towards the stove with a deep sigh, and shovelled into the bag a quantity of coal, then taking a bundle of wood under his arm, returned to my room.

Soon after I heard the voice say:

"*Merci*, good youth!"

The window was then closed, and the howling song was heard, dulled by the distance, for yet some time.

I looked inquiringly at Phillip; but how great soever was my curiosity to know why these impudent demands had been so readily complied with, I did not like to disturb the deep and apparently melancholy reflection into which he seemed to have fallen, neither yet the remarks which he made to himself.

"Yes," murmured he mournfully, "he'll be the death of me yet! He shall — he must leave me at peace! I'll tell everything; — everything?"

He sat gazing into the fire with a troubled countenance, and was evidently deeply agitated. Perhaps he felt as if it would be a relief to unburden his mind. After a deep sigh, therefore, and without any direct question on my part, he told me as follows:

"When I first came into this house, three years ago, this was then, as now my room and I liked it very much. I was occupied the whole day in my business: I had at that time a passion for the grocery-trade, more even than I have now. I loved my paper-bags, and could have let coffee and rice slide for hours

through my fingers, delighted to see their excellent quality. The room in the neighbouring house, over the way there, was at that time empty. It was used as a lumber-room. One day, however, I saw the people open the window, fetch away the old furniture, and wash the floor. I understood that it was let to a medical student, who was just come from the university, and would remain here very quietly for some time in order to prepare for his examination.

"I was regularly pleased to think of this gentleman, for as our windows were so close I hoped to have many intellectual and instructive conversations with the young doctor, and especially by his means to increase my knowledge of medicinal herbs, in which we deal. But — good Heavens! He flitted into this room with only three books — a student with three books! — but with a dozen pipes, a monster of a beer-glass, a number of murderous weapons, and — what do you think? — with — a human skeleton! The maid-servant of the house told me that her mistress, at the sight of this horrible thing, fainted, and when she came to again, insisted that the student should at once take himself off again. At which he laughed her to scorn, and stayed where he was. He would not be driven away, and the police, to whom she applied, said, they could do nothing with him. When this came to Mr. Burbus's knowledge, he laughed, and said he would very willingly evacuate the mouse-hole, but that his skeleton had taken such a fancy to the dismal room, that in any case he would have to wait upon the lady of the house in person and desire an extension of the term for which the room was taken.

"Now, I ask you, can you conceive the horrible idea? Poor woman, she was in the most dreadful state of mind, and for one whole day I did scarcely anything else than weigh and measure out camphor and spirits of hartshorn for her. Mr. Burbus, however, stayed where he was, and would you believe it? came to be on the most friendly terms with madam, yonder, but that was in a way which was very unpleasant to us.

"You must know, that Miss Barbara and this neighbour were not on the best of terms, and as their two sleeping-rooms on the lower storey were opposite each other, as ours are, and they could see into each other's chamber, the building-up of these windows was often talked of, to put an end to this nuisance. Well, not long after Mr. Burbus was settled down, one morning when I was dressing I suddenly heard a horrible scream from the storey below, and ran down to see what it was. It was Miss Barbara, and horribly frightened she was. My principal was calling out for sal volatile and cold water, and you can think how I rushed upstairs again. Nay, I actually so far forgot myself as to rush into the chamber of Miss Barbara, where I beheld a horrible sight.

"She was lying in an arm-chair near the window, with closed eyes, in a fainting-fit, and had still the cord of the window-curtain, which was thereby half raised, convulsively in her hand. I glanced through the window at the neighbouring house, and what do you think I saw at the open window opposite? Why, the skeleton of Mr. Burbus dressed up, with a great black handkerchief round its neck, a linen cloth round its body, and a label hanging from its grinning mouth

—just as one sees in old pictures, on which was written in large letters:

“Good morning, dear sister!”

“I ran off to the police, but when I came back accompanied by a sergeant of police, the skeleton was gone, and we could not even bind them over to keep the peace. Nothing could be done for us excepting that madam, yonder, should allow Mr. Burbus to have his name upon her door. But that she would not do — no, not she! and to my horror and disgust he remained where he was.

“You may very well imagine that at first I never troubled myself about my dreadful neighbour. I kept my window shut, and when he came past the shop I turned my head away. Yet what was the good of it? Heaven knows only what he had in view; but he never rested till he had made my acquaintance and brought me on speaking terms with him. Often he would come into the shop to buy tobacco, and many and many a time I have given him what he asked for without exchanging a word with him! But then he had a wicked pleasure in saying horrible things to me about the bodies that he had dissected, and such like. And he has the knack of putting everything in such a horribly ludicrous point of view, that for the whole day after I could not touch a morsel of food; and the worst of it was that he generally called forth these disgusting ideas before dinner-time. In short, I did not know how I should ever get out of his fangs.

“Then one day, unfortunately, something occurred between us — but it would not interest you if I were to tell you.” — Here he suddenly paused, and appeared to be contending with unpleasant recollections — “so

ever since that day," continued he, "I've been obliged to open the window when he calls — good heavens! I have been obliged to be on good terms with that wretch! Did you never read the story of the innocent maiden who was chained in the dragon's cave and was compelled to fill the pipe of the monster and to boil his coffee? — That is just my case! From that day I have been forced to let him have tobacco and coffee because you see I am unfortunately in his power. The most unlucky chance has put me in his power. Oh the wretch!"

"But," said I, "could you do nothing to free yourself from the tyranny of this Doctor Burbus?"

Phillip clasped his hands over his thin, pointed knees, and said in a most mournful voice:

"Oh, gracious goodness, no! After a long struggle with myself I one day asked him, when he came again for tobacco and coffee, if he would be so obliging as to settle the bill for what was then owing. Well, what did he do? That very evening as I was innocently leaning out of the open window, and nodded to him in the most friendly manner, for I was desirous of beginning a conciliatory conversation with him, what did he do, I say, but all at once hold up a large bottle on which was printed in large letters, AQUA-FORTIS? This bottle he set on the window-ledge before him, whilst he cast a horrible glance at me. But I had not the slightest idea of what his intention was. I looked at him quite innocently, and watched him fill a glass syringe out of the large bottle, which he then laid down before him, took up his long pipe and smoked, and then — only think! — took up the syringe and pointed it at me! I gave a scream, rushed back and shut the

window, terrified, as you may suppose. Good heavens, I now knew the man! He would assuredly have damaged me for life, if he could."

"From that day," continued Phillip, "I have never dared to deny him anything. I would fain see how long Heaven can tolerate his wickedness.

"But now it is ten o'clock," said he, "and Miss Reissmehl has desired that after this hour there may be no light in the house. So we'll go to bed."

I was quite contented to do so. But before I lay down under my sloping-roof, I examined once more the carved company which surrounded my bed, and vastly amused myself by the strangely fantastic grimaces of the little figures.

CHAPTER V.

The Counting-House.

My first day in the grocery-shop may be taken as the prototype of all that followed, each like an egg, exactly resembling its fellow, even to the most unimportant particulars; even in matters which did not properly belong to the business itself; for instance, amongst other things, the preference which Miss Barbara showed to my colleague over me, nay, even over her brother himself. At first, as I have already said, this somewhat annoyed me, but when I saw soon after, that on Sundays, and even on holidays, whilst I was allowed to visit my grandmother, Phillip was obliged to stay at home and give his company to Miss Barbara; and, moreover, when I saw the longing glance that he cast *after* me when I went out; and when he confessed to

me on one occasion that he should so much have preferred having a walk with me, adding with a sigh, that he had so little time to himself, I no longer envied him, and could not repress a little smile when I heard him summoned by Miss Reissmehl to afternoon-coffee, or when he went in an evening into the parlour, to enjoy, without doubt, a better supper than mine, which generally consisted of bread-and-butter and beer in the shop. This smile of mine, however, or something else, the lady herself seemed to have observed with displeasure, for I soon became aware of a retrogression in her favour towards me.

But beyond my own observation on this subject, I was told one day by poor old Miss Schmied, as usual amid a flood of tears, that Miss Barbara spoke of me as being heedless and untrustworthy. Nor was this charge wholly without cause, for I had on one occasion put a pound-and-half weight into the scale instead of a pound. That, however, which had still more excited her against me was, that one day, having trusted a poor shoemaker's wife for oil to the amount of fivepence, for which she was very indignant, I on the following day had a great triumph over her in showing her the money, which was honestly paid. This, my disputatiousness, as she termed it, embittered her greatly. In short, I was constantly, but wholly without intention, doing something or other to annoy and displease her.

From this and various other causes it required no long time to discover that I had imagined the charms of the grocery-business to be much greater than they were, and I began to feel that this was not the way in which a grand mercantile career was to be made.

But what was to be done? My grandmother, to whom I one Sunday afternoon confided something of my disappointment, laid down the old general's spectacles on her prayer-book, and said, "it was a great misfortune that the egg would always be wiser than the hen that laid it;" that, "all beginnings were difficult, and that all roads led to Rome." Poor old Schmied, on the contrary, was not able to make any remark on my complaint about Miss Reissmehl, so great was her emotion. She sorrowfully shook her head, wept for some time, then sighed forth:

"Oh that his poor dear father had but lived!"

As yet I had only on rare occasions entered the counting-house, as for instance when it was necessary for my master to receipt a bill, or when I was wanted to dust a packet of old invoices to which he had occasion to refer. One day, however, when I had been there about a fortnight, he called to me from his desk, and told me with great solemnity that I must now begin to learn something of the theoretical portion of the business.

For this purpose my first duty was to copy letters. Ah! never shall I forget my first experience in this line! It was not a letter addressed to any celebrated sea-port or trading town, nor had it reference to a foreign cargo. It was a letter to a neighbouring miller, to whom my master, in reply to his favour of such and such a date, was unpleasantly compelled to state, that the sack of meal marked H H, No. 6, was in an impure state from the presence of mice. Finally he remarked, that he had been obliged to sell it considerably under price to the military hospital, and subscribed himself most obediently,

JOHANN PETER REISSMEHL.

All this I copied, imitating the signature of my master with the greatest exactness and with remarkable success. For this, however, I received a severe reprimand; Mr. Reissmehl assuring me, that it never would do for an apprentice to imitate the signature of his master.

This counting-house, like the whole place, had its own queer and remarkable features. The desk was ornamented with carved work and figures similar to those of the beams in my attic. In front stood two tall stools, one for the principal, the other for Phillip, and for me there was a folding-table at the upper end of the desk and a cane-stool. Here I now sate and looked up at the respect-inspiring countenance of Mr. Reissmehl, and at the melancholy weariful features of Phillip, who was usually wholly occupied by carrying into the ledger the entries made the day before on the large slate which was used for that purpose in the shop.

The window of the counting-house, which was strongly defended outside by an iron grating, looked into my former school-playground. Many were the times I sate gazing out wistfully, pleased only to think that my former play-fellows could not see me, the wildest in the whole school, now seated on a stool copying letters or other business papers.

As I had not unfrequently a good deal of leisure time, that is to say, as my master did not keep me constantly employed at my desk, it may easily be imagined that I occupied myself in all kind of foolish ways. I had, whilst at school, acquired a remarkable expertness in shooting little pellets of bread through a quill as if through a pop-gun, and now again I resumed this amusement. I began in the first place, by aiming at

my colleague Phillip, and hit him on one occasion on the nose. He, however, was of too phlegmatic a nature to furnish me with much fun. Whether it were that he really did not feel, or that he would not, out of respect to his principal, take any notice, I cannot say; but whenever I hit him, even though he might give a frightened start, he would only glance at Mr. Reissmehl with an anxious expression, as if to see whether he had noticed him doing so.

Besides us three, however, who occupied the counting-house, there was yet a fourth in the corner of the room, exactly opposite me. This was the little fat poodle Fanny, who lay sleeping on the top of a wool-pack for the greater part of the day. With what tenderness, nay with what reverence did not Phillip treat this dog! I had often observed that if Mr. Reissmehl called him, and the dog barked at the same moment, he would run first to the latter to see what she wanted. This was another incentive to me to aim now and then a few of my bullets at the lazy little animal. She was a capital target for me; now I hit her on her fat body, now upon her nose, and as she was too lazy to rise up from the wool-pack, she burst forth into a hoarse, lamenting howl, a tone so distressing to Phillip, that he almost tumbled off his tall seat in his haste to see what was amiss. Now and then also my master would do the same, and many a time Miss Barbara rushed out of the kitchen to inquire what ailed the favourite.

After awhile, however, this good lady made a close search around the body of the little animal, and found some of my bread pellets. Naturally enough, her suspicions fell upon me, but as I preserved the most inno-

cent countenance, she did not venture to accuse me, merely waiting for a favourable moment, which was not long in presenting itself.

Miss Reissmehl could keep watch upon me through a small round window which looked into the counting-house from the adjoining parlour, of which I have so often spoken. Here she took her stand and watched me narrowly. From the time, however, when Fanny had so nearly betrayed me, I made use of another target. This was nothing less than the hat of my master, which was hung upon a large nail near this little window. As Miss Barbara, however, watched only for my attacks on the dog, it was some time before she discovered my new aim, nor would she have done so at all had not one of my balls unfortunately hit the little window instead of the hat. A shrill outcry now sounded from the parlour, Phillip let fall his pen and turned a look of bewildered terror on Mr. Reissmehl, who, however, remained sitting unmoved, and merely called out with a loud voice to know what it was all about.

I knew very well. Miss Barbara came rushing into the counting-house so angry, that, unable to articulate a word, she could do nothing but fiercely gesticulate. Presently, however, her tongue found utterance, and the walls of the counting-house seemed to echo with her accusations against me. I endeavoured to excuse myself, but she being in possession of my quill-gun, and I being obliged at her command to open my hand, there alas! was undeniable evidence of my guilt. I was still holding several of my unused bread-bullets. Neither did it avail me anything, to declare that I was only shooting at the hat. She remained immovable

in her conviction that I was aiming at her face in order to frighten her to death!

My master shook his head and looked very angry. Phillip, who seemed to have lost the use of his tongue, folded his hands on the desk and looked suspiciously at me, whilst Miss Barbara lifted the corner of her apron to her eyes, and said, almost with sobs:

"So young and yet so wicked!"

After my master had given me a very grave, though not a very severe lecture, he said that he should be compelled, at the desire of his sister, to write to my grandmother, and give her an account of my misbehaviour.

He did so, and I was obliged to convey this despatch, like a second Uriah, with my own hands.

If my relations were rational enough to regard this occurrence rather as a piece of mischief than an act of depravity, still my grandmother made me a grand oration, in which, amongst other highly intellectual remarks were these, "that the righteous man is merciful to his beast," and "never torment an animal for sport," whence it was evident to me that Mr. Reissmehl had laid more stress upon my misdemeanour as regarded Fanny than his sister.

When I re-entered the shop, Miss Barbara assumed a grieved expression of countenance, and first condescended to speak to me at supper by inquiring from me what my grandmother said to my bad behaviour.

If at this moment I had only cast down my eyes as if overcome by shame, and murmured a few unintelligible words, I should have done well! But, instead of that, and really without thinking any harm, I simply replied that my grandmother had said one ought never

to torment an animal for sport, and that a righteous man was merciful to his beast.

I made this reply in the simplicity of truth itself; and if I had not discovered my blunder by the extremely angry glance which Miss Reissmehl flung at me, I might have seen it by the altered behaviour of Phillip, who would not, that evening, speak a word to me; but seated himself thoughtfully at his table, and seemed sunk in reflection, as if overcome by all the wickedness of which I had been guilty.

CHAPTER VI.

Herr Doctor Burbus.

NEXT day was Sunday, and as Phillip chose to treat me with marked disdain, for which I could see no sufficient ground, I made no attempt to approach him, as he probably expected. In the evening, on the contrary, having passed through his room, where he was then occupied, I banged the door in the wooden partition which separated our chambers, with such violence, as to shake the whole wall.

My chamber was quite dark, and I had a long weariful time before me, for, as it was Sunday, when the shop was closed at the earliest dusk-hour, I had plenty of time between then and ten o'clock to think over all my sins.

I opened the window and looked at the opposite house, but everything there was as dark as in my own chamber. Our neighbour had not come home, and the only sign of life which I could perceive from my elevation, was the street-lamp, which was suspended

below, between the two houses, and which, from this point, seemed to make an ineffectual effort to enlighten the thick darkness.

I closed my window again, and threw myself with a desperate sense of ennui on my bed, and began to think over my late experience. I had not, however, so occupied myself long, when I heard, across the way, the voice of Dr. Burbus, who was calling my colleague, and who soon after knocked on my window.

"Ah, halloo!" exclaimed he. "Kind pupil of Mercury, where linger you? Phillip! Phillip of Macedon! be so very obliging as to open your window!"

In his stead, I did that which he desired, and asked him what he wanted.

My voice sounded to him strange, but as he had seen me in the shop he knew who I was.

"Ay indeed! It is you, is it, young hopeful? And where, then, is your worthy mentor and colleague? Be so obliging as to present to him my kind salutation, and ask him if he will not come across and pay me a little visit."

I left the window, opened the door into Phillip's room, but saw to my surprise that he was not there. The tallow-candle, half burnt down, was upon the table, and the door stood ajar. I went out of the room and looked right and left along the passage; but the whole house, above and below, was hushed as a tomb.

As I have already said, there was a something strangely dismal about this house, and now feeling myself so entirely alone, I was right glad to get back to my own room and have some talk with Dr. Burbus, whom I found still standing at his window awaiting my return.

"I am very sorry," I said to him, "but I cannot find Mr. Phillip."

"Ho! ho!" laughed he, "Monsieur Phillip the jester!

Oh may they ever bright remain,
The golden days of love!

"But do you know what?" continued he merrily, "without paying you any compliment, you seem to me less of a donkey than your worthy colleague! Would you really do me the honour of coming out here and spending an hour or two with me? I am just going to mix a capital bowl of punch which I think will be agreeable to your young tradesman palate."

I thanked him for this flattering invitation, but remarked that it was not at all clear to me how I was to get across the space between the two houses and in at his window. Here, however, he assured me were no insurmountable difficulties; and quick as thought, he fetched from the back-ground of his room a strong plank which he shoved out of his window till it rested on the ledge of mine, and so doing he declared that it supplied as safe a bridge as anybody could desire.

At sight of this mode of transit I could not but feel that it would be a breakneck labour even to attempt it; but Burbus, who ascribed my hesitation to the true cause, remarked in the calmest tone possible:

"You seem to me to be greatly wanting in courage. But when I tell you that Phillip, the noble, has sometimes made use of this bridge — Phillip, the most timid man in Christendom — I think you will not stay considering much longer."

I must confess that it was the fear of appearing like a coward before Doctor Burbus, that at length induced

me to try this novel mode of migration. I therefore climbed through my window, and laying myself flat upon the plank with my face downward, felt my feet seized by a strong hand, so that, almost as quick as lightning, I was across at the other window, and, to the great delight of Burbus, rolled down upon the floor.

When I had again gained my firm footing, I made my bow to the doctor, and then cast a hasty glance round the room. My chamber was certainly not splendidly furnished; but, good Heavens! what a state of things was here! The walls had originally been white-washed, but time and misuse had converted them to a dingy grey. Burbus, in the meantime, had done his utmost, to give them a decorative character; and, perceiving that my eye was taking a survey round, he lifted the candle, which by-the-bye I must remark was stuck into a bottle instead of a candlestick, and showed me that the whole room was painted with all kinds of grotesque figures, which, according to his explanation, represented a dance of witches.

I expressed the pleasure which I felt in the beauty of this fresco, and my astonishment that by means of charcoal and sealing-wax alone so much effect could be produced. I then learned that these bold sketches had been made by a friend of his, a painter who occasionally visited him. They represented human beings, monsters and animals, all in a confused mass, and it seemed to me that I recognised amongst the first, here and there, a figure that was familiar to me. True; here was the doctor himself, his long pipe in his hand, tall boots and immense spurs, riding upon a large bottle, and there — I could not help laughing

aloud — there came my worthy colleague Phillip, riding on a broomstick with his melancholy countenance turned round, looking behind him at Miss Barbara, who was seated majestically on Fanny. After her came Mr. Reissmehl in garden costume, his large ledger between his legs, in his hand a funnel, and on his head a huge paper-bag instead of his hat.

However much these paintings amused me, I could not help looking round for something more, namely the skeleton of which Phillip had told me. Ah, there it was! near the doctor's bed, his old velvet-coat hung over its shoulders, and his cap set upon its head. In the outstretched right hand, it held a tallow-candle, which probably served Doctor Burbus when he read in bed. In the left, which hung down, a large jug was fastened by means of an iron hook, the jug probably from which, in case of need, the doctor quenched his thirst.

After I had sufficiently contemplated the room, I found time also to make a more close survey than I had hitherto been able to do of the doctor himself, who, in the meantime, had thrown himself into a chair and invited me to do the same.

He probably was not less than thirty years of age; somewhat under middle size, but of a very powerful build; and his countenance, which was continually laughing, and had something remarkably pleasing and good-tempered in its expression, was furnished with a strong moustache and beard, considerably thicker and richer in colour than his hair, which showed here and there very suspicious marks of increasing thinness.

He had placed upon the stove an earthenware vessel, greatly resembling a washhand-basin, in which

he was heating the water, preparatory to the composition of the intended punch, which indeed he now very soon set about. For this purpose he brought forth a bottle of brandy, some lemons and a bag of grey blotting-paper containing sugar, and so mixed the punch. He offered me a pipe, and as I was ashamed to refuse it, or even to confess myself unaccustomed to this indulgence, I accepted it and began to smoke. After he had filled two large beer-glasses with the steaming liquor, he tilted his chair back to the wall, and invited me to drink and be merry.

"But tell me, my well-beloved!" continued he, after he had taken a great gulp of the punch, "whatever put into your head the crazy idea of being a cheesemonger? Why did you not study?"

"Dear doctor," I replied, "I was deficient in the necessary means. My parents, who might have supported me at the university, have long been dead."

"Oh, most respectable," laughed the doctor, "now look at me! I have had nobody to do anything for me this many a long year, nobody to help me through the world, or make anything of me. Don't you know the great word, 'the spout?' That is the magic word which they who understand and know how to use can make open chests and safes."

I assured him that I had never heard of such a thing, on which he burst into a ringing peal of laughter, swallowed a great mouthful of his liquor, and assured me that when I became a little better acquainted with him, I should know all about it.

"But tell me now," he continued, "how it happens that in order to learn the noble calling of the shop, you should have chosen precisely the most disagreeable,

prosaic branch of business; should have made a beginning in that of a grocer?"

I cannot tell, whether it were the potency of the punch, of which, following the example of Burbus, I had already swallowed a considerable quantity, which made me unusually loquacious and open-hearted. But, be it what it might, I told the doctor, greatly to his amusement, that I had always thought of distant seas when I saw coffee and sugar, and dreamed of wonderful countries with which I should, though it might be indirectly, become associated by means of the grocery-business. This poetical idea, combined with the prose of Reissmehl's house and family, seemed to him so comic that he burst forth again and again into Homeric peals of laughter.

"Nay, nay, my well-beloved!" said he, at length, "it really is a great pity that the ocean does not expand before your shop; for the old seal is already there, nor is a young stockfish wanting, and as to old Barbara she would not badly represent a mermaid!"

After this sally against my mediate and immediate superiors, he began to speak about the circumstances and affairs of the family. He pronounced the old Philistine, my master, to be a good old fellow in himself, only he hardly dared even to grumble, because the she-dragon completely ruled the house. As for my colleague, whom he termed a camel, he it was, he said, who in reality ruled the house, because the she-dragon conceded to him, and the Philistine, as already said, was subservient to her.

Such conversation was not calculated to increase my love for the tradesman-class, nor to call forth my respect for the Reissmehl family.

But in the meantime the pipe and the punch had not failed to produce their unpleasant and extremely opposite effects. The latter inflamed my blood, excited my brain, and gave extraordinary loquacity to my tongue, whilst on the other hand, the tobacco operated in a paralysing manner. I felt myself as if suddenly seized upon by a nameless anguish of mind, which forced the sweat-drops from my forehead. I was oppressed by a horrible sense of sickness, and when I rose up and in stammering words assured the doctor that I must go back to my chamber, the whole room felt spinning round with me. It seemed as if the figures on the walls had become living, and were rushing past in a wild incessant debauch. The skeleton in the corner seemed to totter, and looked more dismal than ever. Even my good-tempered host himself, who stood before me laughing with all his heart, looked to me like an evil spirit, and with a secret terror I staggeringly sought for the window in order to make my aerial transit.

Doctor Burbus in vain endeavoured to persuade me to remain with him over the night, as I was in a condition which rendered such a style of travelling somewhat dangerous. I did not listen to him. He then shoved the plank from window to window, and I climbed upon it. But no sooner did the cool night-air blow upon me and I hung over the abyss, than I began to cry, and such a dizziness came over me, that I clung fast to the board, and could neither move forward nor backward.

At this memorable moment, in which all was suddenly very dark and hateful within me, I remember, but as if indistinctly, that I heard the voice of the

doctor abusing me, and that I felt myself being shoved forward by a something that was pushed against my body.

At length I perceived myself surrounded by a warmer atmosphere, and tumbling, head over heels, lay upon my chamber-floor, and in a few moments should have been fast asleep.

But my torments were not yet at an end. I felt myself roughly shaken, and slowly opening my eyes saw a figure before me, which at first I took for Doctor Burbus's skeleton, but which I presently recognised as my colleague Phillip, who sighing and lamenting, placed me in bed where I immediately sank into a sound sleep.

CHAPTER VII.

Distress of Mind.

WHEN I awoke early daylight was grey in my chamber. Alas, and everything also was grey within me, for I found myself in that condition which was all the more horrible, because I did not know whether it were the consequence of the past evening, or the beginning of a severe illness. I felt the deadliest, most horrible depression of spirits that ever poor wretch was subjected to. My brain seemed empty and bewildered, and when I attempted to raise myself and look about me, everything seemed to spin round, precisely as on the last evening; the room itself, table and chairs, all went round with me, and when I again closed my eyes to rid myself of the dizziness, I felt as if some one had hung me up by the hair of my head and given me warm water to drink.

I turned over and over in my bed and capitulated with myself from one quarter of an hour to another. At length it was high time for me to rise. I heard Phillip in the next room cough, push his chair along the floor and splash about in his washbasin, in short, make all the usual disturbance which, every morning, accompanied his toilet-performances.

When I was out of bed, I found myself better than I expected. I had imagined that I should be unable to keep my feet for a moment, but I now found myself standing with tolerable stability. An indescribable weakness alone made me anxious, and my hands trembled whenever they took hold of anything. I went to the window, partly to enjoy the fresh morning air, and partly to look into the room of Doctor Burbus, where I had the last evening had an experience on which I could now only think with a shudder. Every thing which I had seen over there, came again before me as in the wild phantasma of a dream, and even now, in the clear morning light, if I closed my eyes, the fresco-dance on the doctor's walls, as well as his skeleton rushed past me, and precisely the fact of not being able to disengage myself from these images was even more distressing than my physical indisposition. I at that time, however, knew but little of that misery, that physical and moral anguish which follows a debauch, and of which the latter is the more horrible of the two.

The doctor, however, over the way, seemed to have paid no penalty, and to be sensible of no indisposition. He had left his window open, spite of the cold night, and the plank upon which I had made my transit was only partly drawn into the room. And all this time,

too, I could hear the lucky fellow snoring away with such force that he would have shaken his window-curtains if his chamber had been furnished in such fashion.

Phillip now opened the door between our two rooms, and seeing me standing there only half-dressed, pale as death, and staring at the house opposite, came forward assuming a most sorrowful countenance and folding his hands, gazed at me with an indescribably melancholy expression.

I in my turn looked at him; but when I saw by his manner that he was about to read me a homily on my folly and depravity, I felt angry, and asked him in a tone of ill-humour what he wanted.

"Oh, nothing," replied he, slowly and solemnly, "I merely wished to see whether you had hurt yourself by your fall, last evening into your room, nothing more."

"I did not fall," returned I, sullenly, "and I think I ought to know."

With that a melancholy smile passed over his features, and he said:

"You were in a condition in which people do not know whether they stand or fall. Ah! and if they do not then fall bodily, yet they fall spiritually only the lower."

I saw plainly that my colleague was about to give me a lecture, and as I was in no state of mind to receive it, I said with warmth that I wished he would let me be quiet; more especially I wished him to understand, added I angrily, that I despised his sneaking ways, and that the greatest kindness he could do me, was never again to trouble himself about me.

This was a reply which he evidently did not look for, and I believe that at any other time I should not have ventured to make it.

He lifted his hands and said, speaking slowly, in a tone of utter condemnation, yet as if it were only by a strong effort that he could bring the words forth:

"I shall be obliged to inform our excellent employer that after your shameful behaviour in so many ways, and especially after your performances of last evening, it will be impossible for me to live with you, even in a business capacity. One of us must leave the house — you or I."

Although I should have had no objection to leave the house, as after my late experience in it, this branch of trade had become unattractive, yet I very well knew that such a step would cause the extremest pain to my relations, who would only place me in some other shop where I might probably fare still worse. For this reason Phillip's words rather frightened me, and I hardly knew how to reply. All at once, however, a thought occurred to my mind, which originated in something at which Burbus had mysteriously hinted, and with this sudden inspiration I turned upon my adversary.

"Very good, Mr. Phillip," I said, speaking now very calmly, "you can tell Mr. Reissmehl just what you please about me, and I will tell him something that I know about you. Do you understand me, Mr. Phillip? You have not been so intimate with your neighbour for nothing."

Scarcely were these words out of my mouth, than I felt sorry, for I saw an expression of perfect despair

in Phillip's countenance. He made a step backwards, put his hands before his face, and said:

"Oh Heavens! the wretch!"

"Yes, you see," I remarked calmly, "some people are not so very immaculate! It will be better, therefore, for us to remain friends. We will hold together, and not one betray the other."

He made no reply, merely nodding his head; but as I somewhat suddenly turned round, I saw that the hand which was in the pocket of his jacket was squared as for a blow, which had reference probably half to me and half to Doctor Burbus; and strange enough, at that very moment the Doctor himself appeared at his window, about to close the casement. His hair and beard hung in a very wild state, and he seemed to be somewhat in a similar condition to myself. He cast at us a morose glance, grumbled out something that sounded like good-morning, and crept back again to his bed. The happy fellow! I, on the contrary, must follow Phillip into the shop, take down the shutters, and begin the regular business of the day, as we were accustomed to clean down the counters and prepare the lamps the evening before.

My reference to this mysterious something, whatever it might be, had evidently deeply agitated the unlucky Phillip, and I should have been glad to know what it in reality was. But, as may naturally be supposed, I left him in the belief that I knew all about it, determining, however, that the next opportunity I had with Doctor Burbus, to fathom the mystery to the bottom.

However meek and mild Phillip might be in a general way, yet his friendliness and consideration

towards me at this moment were almost incredible. It quite touched me when soon after the opening of the shop he brought me out of the cellar a handful of sourkraut, which he assured me was an infallible remedy for my present unhappy condition. And though at the time I took it rather to give him a proof of my confidence, than from any faith I had in it, yet I must confess that it produced a wonderful effect on the state of my stomach.

My fear of his making a complaint of my late excesses to my master or to Miss Barbara completely vanished, more especially as his magnanimity went so far that he called the attention of the latter to my pale, dejected countenance, giving her to understand that I had not slept a wink all night, and that I was evidently grieving on account of my misconduct.

This supposition dispersed somewhat the dark cloud by which this lady's eyes were gloomed when they regarded me, and caused the sunshine of a friendly glance to alight upon me.

Fate, however, seemed to have resolved that between myself and Miss Barbara no green twig of goodwill should ever long remain.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Composing Draught.

THERE stood in one corner of the shop a little cupboard of which Miss Barbara alone had the key. Here were deposited a variety of things which were needed for household use; jars containing preserves, pickles, and the like. Here also was kept for Miss

Barbara's own particular use, a large bottle labelled *medicine*, from which she took a table-spoonful several times in the course of the day. She said frequently that her constitution would not stand the violent alternations of atmosphere between the hot kitchen and the cold shop without, the constant use of this medicine, which she styled a composing-draught, and which she said her excited nervous system rendered necessary.

As she had so frequently occasion to visit the cupboard for this purpose, it often seemed to me perfectly unaccountable why a person in so ailing a state of health should be left to go about the house and down into the cellar by herself. I often thought that something might happen to her, she might faint when she had not her composing-draught near at hand, and then I knew not what consequences might follow.

That which I had feared very soon occurred. Miss Barbara had been one afternoon for some time invisible. when suddenly we heard above our heads a dreadful noise of something falling, evidently on the first floor, which caused even the passive Mr. Reissmehl to raise his head from his desk and desire us to go and see what was amiss.

This was the very thing that I desired. I should thus have an opportunity of knowing something about the ever-locked-up first floor, and I hastily sprang upstairs. Here I saw a door open, but though it was broad day-light I could not at first distinguish anything in the rooms to which it led. All the window-shutters were closed on the outside, and within thick curtains were let down over the windows, so that perfect darkness seemed to prevail through all these first-floor rooms. In a minute or so, however, my eyes

becoming accustomed to the obscurity, I perceived a figure which now and then sent forth feeble sighs, reclining in the corner of a sofa which stood in the room. This was Miss Barbara.

To the right and the left doors stood open which led into other dim chambers. I do not know how the idea came into my head, but I thought Miss Barbara was dead, and was now laid out here on the state-bed; and such an awfully uncomfortable feeling came over me, that I flew downstairs again to fetch my master. On the stairs I ran against Phillip, who also, having heard the disturbance, was coming up to render his help.

My master was sitting below unmoved at his desk, adding up a long bill, and doing so, as was his custom, he spoke audibly to himself:

"Six and eight are fourteen, and nine are three-and-twenty —"

"Mr. Reissmehl," I said, "Miss Barbara is lying on the sofa in a fainting fit."

He motioned me with his hand to be silent, and went on:

"And seven are thirty, and nine are thirty-nine. Carry some water up to her; — I'll come myself and look after her."

As I turned to get a jug to fetch some fresh water from the well, I saw that the key, as sometimes happened, had been left in the door of the old cupboard; and thinking that so doing I should render her most assistance, I unlocked the door, took out the bottle of composing-medicine, and the large table-spoon that lay by it, and hastened upstairs; hearing my master,

who had pushed aside his creaking old office-stool, now slowly following me.

But in the meantime the presence of Phillip had worked miracles; she had come out of her fainting fit, and was now sitting upright on the sofa. As I entered I heard her telling my colleague that having something to do in this room, she seemed to perceive, all at once, as if somebody was going past her, and this terrified her so that she fell back fainting upon the sofa.

Phillip had opened one of the windows, and as I entered, followed by my master, no sooner did Miss Barbara catch sight of me with the bottle in my hand, than she sprang forward in a great rage, and demanded what I wanted?

I replied, as mildly and as feelingly as I could, that having perceived the cupboard below to be unlocked, I had brought up the medicine which I knew she was in the habit of taking.

If I could have looked behind me at this moment, I should have observed a peculiar smile pass over my master's features at these innocent words. But I saw it not, and that which I did see was not anything to excite a smile.

Miss Barbara drew herself back into the sofa-corner, and seemed to be hesitating whether or not again to go off in a swoon, whilst, at the same time, her features were convulsed with an expression of rage which really frightened me.

My master now stepped forward and put out his hand to take the bottle from me, saying:

"Nay, look you, dear sister, if it does you good, do, in Heaven's name, take a dose."

But scarcely had he put forth his hand to take the

bottle from mine, than up she started, intending to snatch it from me, when I, someway, uncertain between the two, let go my hold before either one or the other had taken it, and it fell to the ground, and was broken into a thousand pieces.

Immediately a well-known smell of spirit was diffused around, and I, confounded and astonished in the last degree, could not refrain from exclaiming:

"Nay, but that's brandy!"

"Yes," shrieked Miss Barbara, addressing me, "yes, you young, good-for-nothing fellow, it is indeed brandy! and goodness only knows where you have got it from!"

That was more than I could bear, and I replied with emphasis:

"Where did I get it, Miss Barbara? Why, where should I get it but out of your own cupboard?"

"Indeed! indeed!" exclaimed the lady with yet more violence. "Out of my own cupboard, do you say!" and so saying she lifted her arm as if to strike me.

"Yes," I said, now becoming violent on my part, "out of your own cupboard, and it is the very same brandy-bottle out of which you every day take your great spoonfulls of composing-medicine."

As I said this, I involuntarily stepped somewhat backward, and very well it was that I did so, for half starting up she made another effort to strike me, and failing to reach me sank back on the sofa, and with closed eyes exclaimed:

"I am dying! I am dying!"

"Here's a pretty go," thought I to myself, turned round and ran downstairs and into the counting-house,

where I seated myself on my own stool, and what between anger and vexation, burst out crying to myself.

Very soon after my master came also into the counting-house, and seeing me sitting there crying, crossed his hands behind his back and began to walk up and down the room. He was greatly excited, as was evident by the violent way in which he laid hands upon the various objects that were around him. Thus he tweaked the nose of the little monster on the stove every time he passed, and kicked the basket in which the poodle was lying; the poodle, by-the-bye, which when she heard the commotion upstairs had made a feeble attempt to rouse herself, but her laziness being greater than her devotion to her mistress, she remained slumbering where she was.

At length Mr. Reissmehl seated himself at his desk, and whilst he worked an old pen-stump violently round in the inkstand, said, without even glancing at me:

"Look you, my young friend! the circumstance which has just occurred is very, nay most extremely disagreeable to me. In reply to your advertisement I wrote on December 6th to your grandmother, and we came to the understanding that I should take you as an apprentice and instruct you in the elementary branches of the grocery-business. I cannot charge you with having been either inattentive or negligent; but look you, my friend, you are young, very young, and hence it may easily be conceived that all the little, insignificant circumstances which have happened would cause my sister to be exceedingly angry with you; a state of things which must be unpleasant to you, and which, as I well know, cannot easily be altered.

Therefore I have come to the opinion that you had better try to persuade your grandmother — right — you have also a guardian — persuade them to look out for another situation for you, a situation in which the business and the domestic life are not so closely connected as they are in my case. Yes, truly! you understand me. Go now and tell your grandmother what I say."

Of a truth I understood Mr. Reissmehl's meaning perfectly. To have been dismissed from my apprenticeship under other circumstances would have seemed very terrible to me. But I had seen quite enough of the grocery-business, and therefore my master's speech produced no unpleasant effect on my mind.

But as to my grandmother and my aunts — alas! I foresaw a great opposition as far as they were concerned.

Mr. Reissmehl, however, again assured me, that what he had said was only a proposition which he wished me to lay before my relations, who would then take it into deliberate consideration.

I took my cap from the nail where it hung in the counting-house, made my bow to Mr. Reissmehl and went out.

CHAPTER IX.

At the Doctor's.

WHEN I came into the street I drew a deep breath; I felt like a bird which has slipped out of the cage. If my relations would consent to cancel my indentures with Mr. Reissmehl, I should then again have a

something indefinite before me, a fresh future in which I could build up the most beautiful castles in the air. I felt that during the short period of my apprenticeship my desires had greatly expanded; and that every house of business in the town, even the very greatest, seemed to me to have something of the grocery-shop character about it. I felt, therefore, as if nothing short of the other side of the world — that is to say, beyond the walls of our town — could be lovely or attractive to me.

With this feeling I rubbed down the nose of the stone figure which stood before the house, and said to him derisively:

"You can't go with me out into the world; you are captive to the Reissmehl family!"

But as I felt the icy coldness of the stone, a chill seemed to pass through my entire frame, and it occurred to me that as my grandmother would certainly refuse her consent, therefore I also was captive to the Reissmehl family, and under far more oppressive circumstances than the old stone soldier, who, as it seemed to me to-day, had a remarkably merry expression of countenance.

I hastened round the corner, but scarcely had I gone many steps when I heard a deep voice calling to me from a side street, and by the voice itself I immediately knew who it was.

"Ha! most beloved apprentice; most noble shop-keeper!" cried Dr. Burbus behind me. "Whither away so fast?"

So saying the doctor overtook me, and I was no little surprised to see him with a quantity of books under his arm instead of a long pipe in his mouth.

More especially remarkable was it, that his costume on this occasion was different to that in which he generally appeared. Instead of the ancient green velvet coat, which he called his "velvet tunic," he wore a black dress-coat with very long and pointed laps, and a waistcoat of the same, whilst instead of the shirt-collar, which was generally worn open, his neck was to-day confined in a cravat so tall and stiff, that not being able to bend his head in speaking to me, he could only cast down his eyes, and that with extraordinary distortion of countenance. To complete this festival costume, he wore on his head a hat considerably the worse for wear, with the narrowest brim imaginable, and on his hands a pair of white cotton-gloves, which must have seen a great deal of service, as he kept his forefinger and thumb very closely pressed together in order to conceal the inquisitive finger-tips, which otherwise would have peeped through the holes.

The doctor inquired very sympathetically how I had slept on the late eventful night, and still more in what condition I awoke? I described to his great amusement the miserable experience which for the first time had entered, like an evil spirit, into my young life. When, however, I went on to say that other adventures had befallen me, he would have no nay, but I must turn back with him to his own room and tell him everything.

There being really no urgent necessity that Mr. Reissmehl's message to my grandmother should be immediately delivered, I did as he wished, and returned with him to the house adjoining our own, which was in fact a draper's shop. As it happened, I had never had any acquaintance, and seldom came in contact

with the young people who were employed here. For one reason, they were all older than myself; and more than that, they, being knights of the ell-wand, regarded themselves as taking a higher rank in society than I, and accordingly looked down upon me.

To-day, as I entered with the doctor, they glanced one at another, began to laugh, and one of them asked in a voice imitating that of a drunken person, what I was pleased to want; whereupon, to my no little surprise, the doctor replied in a loud voice:

"Hear you, young fellows of the counter! I forbid you asking questions of my patients. Our young neighbour seeks my aid as a surgeon. He wants nothing from you and your yard-measures — not he!"

The shopmen looked somewhat confounded, and several customers who were being served, gazed with wonder on the doctor, who trod in a dignified manner through the shop, and shouting down the long house-passage to the servant in a most audible voice, inquired:

"How many patients have called during my absence?"

Then without waiting for an answer from the laughing maid-servant, he continued, as if in reply to her, and in a voice loud enough for every word to be audible in the shop:

"Indeed? six patients — and two of them bed-ridden!"

So having said, he went upstairs very quietly, I following. A large card was hanging on his room-door, on which was written in a very legible hand:

"Doctor Burbus, practising physician, is, on account of his many engagements in the town, to be consulted

only from eight o'clock till ten in the morning, and from five till seven in the evening. Poor persons prescribed for gratis."

After what had already come to my knowledge regarding the doctor, to say nothing of what my colleague had told me, I had not expected to find a single name on his door; I therefore was no little surprised when I read:

"When will the doctor, after so many written applications, pay me a visit?" Kranz, tailor.

And below this:

"The Herr Doctor is earnestly requested to call upon me, in his own person, next Saturday." The Laundress.

And still farther:

"Herr Doctor, I wish to speak to you in person by word of mouth. Joachim Klotz, shoemaker. P.S. on account of the new boots which are now ready."

"I am really glad to see," said I, when I had hastily glanced over these missives, "that you have a tolerably good practice, and I should think amongst paying people. Are these patients dangerously ill? I know Kranz, the tailor; he made me a new coat."

"Indeed?" said the doctor, in a tone of indifference; "Yes, they are most of them in the last stage of disease. I can do nothing more for them; I have done everything that lies in my power."

We entered the room, which remained from the former evening very clearly impressed upon my memory, but which to-day in the scanty light afforded by its only window, presented a still more gloomy and uncomfortable appearance. Whilst, at the doctor's request, I was giving him a detailed account of the occurrences

of this day, I looked around me with curiosity. The skeleton had on its head the doctor's cap, and his old velvet coat hung upon its shoulders. The most picturesque confusion prevailed on chair and table; here lay a broken rapier, there a number of books and papers. The plank on which I had been shoved to my own chamber, was reared in a corner, and it seemed to me interesting now by daylight to contemplate the abyss over which I had passed, as well as the window of my own chamber.

Whilst the doctor went into a corner of his room to take off his holiday attire, I looked at the various things on the table, and amongst the rest discovered, half covered with tobacco-ashes and half-burnt matches, a manuscript-book inscribed, "The Diary of Doctor Burbus." I also had once kept a diary, a piece of business which proved the most difficult I ever undertook. I had found myself obliged to write a whole page about the walks which I had taken, about what I had been reading and learning in the past day, and such like. But frankly to confess, as I was never much of a scholar, the greater number of pages in my diary were filled somewhat in this way: "The 16th, nothing remarkable occurred to-day."

Now, however, I felt real curiosity as to how a man of experience and learning like Doctor Burbus would fill the pages of his diary. Therefore after courteously asking him to permit me to look into the book, and receiving his full permission, I opened it, and was astonished to perceive that the greatest part of it remained still blank paper. I thought probably, therefore, that it was new and could only have been commenced a short time before; the date, however,

on the first page shewed me that it was at least ten years old, and that now for a long time the doctor had not written a word in it.

On the first page was entered an account of a jovial evening, which was concluded by a substantial carouse. Half a year later came the observation, "I shall from this time accustom myself to reply to every assertion that 'it is very indifferent to me.'" Soon after another entry stated that he had altered his phrase, and that he now "found everything impossible;" farther on, everything becomes "quite classical," and lastly the pithy saying is again altered to "'Pon honour, quite famous."

Between these various entries several pages had perhaps been torn out, or beer and wine-bills or even a washing-bill written in. When I seemed to have gone through all the written pages and supposed that the remainder was blank paper, I came to one on which these lines were written:

Take my advice, begin a new score,
And make the old ale-house jolly;
Hang up a green bush above the door
And drink down melancholy.

Then followed:

"Second day in Christmas week. The beer began to be remarkably good. *In the evening* a drinking-bout. *Morning*, uncommon low. *Evening*, drinking-bout — on the 27th. *Morning*, uncommon low. *Evening*, drinking-bout, on the 28th. *Morning*, uncommon low; *Evening*, drinking-bout. On 29th and 30th the same. On 31st, morning, uncommon low; at dinner a little intellectual enlivenment; later a milder ditto; in the evening an altogether magnificent New-Year's Eve jollification. On

1st of January, after I had given my congratulations to the New Year, read a celebrated treatise by the immortal seven, which N. lent to me; subject, 'Low spirits after drinking curable.' I derived a good deal of useful information therefrom."

With this entry, the confessions of a beautiful soul came to an end.

In the meantime the doctor had resumed his old green velvet coat, and after I had cast yet another glance at the opposite house, we left the chamber. The doctor before descending the stairs rubbed out from his slate the applications of his three incurable patients, and we issued forth into the street, I on my way to my grandmother's, he to his club, where, as he assured me, he should find the most intellectual company in Christendom assembled.

CHAPTER X.

Family-Council.

I REACHED the house of my grandmother just as it was beginning to get dusk. The lamps in the street were being let down with a great rattle, lighted, and then wound up again, an operation which I in my childhood always watched with great pleasure.

As soon as I entered my aunt's shop, she came out of the parlour with a candle, shading her eyes with her hand, as was her habit, that the light might not dazzle her, and behold, instead of a customer, it was I! Although outwardly calm, it was not without a beating of the heart that I bade her good evening, and went forward into the parlour to my grandmother,

who was busy at that moment fixing a large green shade over the lamp.

To my great joy I saw that good old Miss Schmied was there also, sitting on the other side of the table, with a piece of stuff laid out smooth before her, upon which she was very carefully laying down a paper-pattern preparatory to cutting it out. Everything looked cosy in the room. We in our attics were not allowed any more wood for kindling, because, although the cold was yet severe, it was getting towards spring. But here, as the evening was cool, my grandmother had had a good fire made, so that the whole room was pleasantly warm, whilst several apples placed on the top of the stove, and now beginning to roast, made an audible hissing and sputtering, and diffused around an agreeable odour.

Neither of the two ladies observed me at first, so busily were they occupied, each with her own work. Grandmother, indeed, was so much absorbed that she appeared not to hear Miss Schmied, who said something to her in an undertone which I did not understand. Most likely it was some pious remark which had reference to their former conversation; for my grandmother, after she had fixed the lamp-shade, and removed from her nose the spectacles of the French general, leaned back in her chair, and, clasping her hands together, said :

"Yes, yes, Schmied; blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

On this I thought it was high time for me to announce myself, which I accordingly did, with a loud, outspoken:

"Good evening, grandmother!" and at once the thread of their discourse was broken.

"Oh, indeed! you are there, are you!" said the old lady, and lifted the lamp-shade the better to see me; but poor old Schmied glanced lovingly up from her work and smiled kindly, whilst she drew me a chair towards the table, upon which I seated myself somewhat reluctantly. The truth was that I did not feel at my ease; for I instantly saw that if I introduced the subject which had brought me there, I should be doing violence, as it were, to the solemn state of mind in which both ladies were, and that in a disagreeable manner. In the meantime, my grandmother appeared to be in a very good humour, for instead of beginning to quote her proverbs, she asked me, laughing, whether the cunning god Mercury, had yet taught me any of his roguish tricks?

She also inquired after the health of Mr. Reissmehl, and hoped that all went on well with Miss Barbara, when to my satisfaction I perceived that at the mention of this name Miss Schmied made a gesture expressive of disgust and aversion.

"Aha!" thought I to myself, "now is the time to throw out my sheet-anchor!"

After I had assured my grandmother that Mr. Reissmehl was in good health, I added:

"As for Miss Barbara, I neither know nor care how she is, for a wickeder person than she is, you cannot, grandmother, imagine!"

At these last words I glanced at old Miss Schmied, whose countenance betrayed anything but displeasure.

"Yes," continued I, assuming a tone that seemed akin rather to crying than laughing, "Yes, Miss Barbara

torments me the whole day long, and I tell you out, plump and plain, grandmother, I really cannot stay any longer at Mr. Reissmehl's!"

The old lady was so taken aback by my sudden and uncompromising declaration, that she looked at me for some time, without being able to utter a word. Poor Schmied, however, began quickly to weep, and was so affected that she could hardly bring out her words:

"Oh good gracious! my dear lady, I have often told you so, I've often said so! Anywhere but in that Reissmehl's family, anywhere but there where it is so gloomy and uncomfortable! Eh, the poor creature!"

"Eh, what!" returned my grandmother, as soon as she had recovered from her astonishment, "what poor creature! I beg of you, Miss Schmied, that you will not encourage that lad in his wicked expressions regarding so estimable a person as Miss Barbara Reissmehl!"

"Estimable person!" repeated Miss Schmied in a tone of contempt: "Ah, my dear lady, I could tell you a different story. — But I will be silent," added she, "I will be silent, and let him tell you how Miss Reissmehl has behaved to him."

Without waiting for this to be said a second time, I related all the friendly skirmishes with Miss Barbara in which I had been involved by means of the composing-draught. That I coloured somewhat highly may be easily understood, and produced thereby such a strongly-drawn picture of the wicked lady's character, that my grandmother gravely shook her head, and my aunt, who in the meantime had come back from the shop, kept saying, over and over again, "Ah, that is very bad! that is very bad!"

As to Miss Schmied, she first laughed and cried simultaneously; then the thought of my melancholy fate, wrung the bitterest tears from her eyes, she, however, exulting all the time, because she had not been mistaken in Miss Barbara.

Neither did I fail to insinuate that I learned next to nothing in Mr. Reissmehl's business, where there was little for me to do besides weighing coffee and sugar and such like. "And therefore," said I, by way of winding up my complainings, "I would just as soon be a tailor as remain any longer in that house, where it is besides so dismal that one cannot believe otherwise than that it is haunted!"

These my declarations seemed so satisfactory to Miss Schmied, that she cast me a friendly glance, then took up my defence with great volubility, and justified my desire to leave Mr. Reissmehl's service by such cogent reasons that in the end both my grandmother and aunt agreed to give their permission and consent to my leaving, that is to say, in case my guardian made no opposition.

Who now could be happier than I, seeing that this storm was so well got through! During supper, indeed, I had grown so bold, that cautious as I was, I began to tell them the story of the skeleton and the first-floor window, which so vastly amused my audience, that they all, my grandmother included, laughed immoderately. Amid all this talk it grew late, and after my grandmother had solemnly promised the first thing in the morning to write to my guardian and induce him to consent to my indentures to Mr. Reissmehl being cancelled, I took my leave.

CHAPTER XI.

Lynch-Law.

It was high time that I went home. All the clocks were striking eleven. I could hardly believe it, and counted each stroke to be sure of the fact. The sky, which in the evening had been cloudy, was now clear. It froze and was very cold. The water-courses in the street were covered with a thin coating of ice, which crackled under my feet. The numerous guests poured out of the ale-houses, as the hour had now passed when according to police regulations all lights must be extinguished, and it was only in the large hotels and private houses that the guests remained and the merriment went forward.

I had passed through the principal streets, and was now in the inferior and more irregular portion of the town in which we lived, when I became suddenly aware of from five to six persons standing under the wall of a house, talking together in an undertone and laughing, whilst they seemed to be busily occupied with something. What could it be?

Looking more closely at the place, I observed that they were standing before a great milliner's shop. One of them carried a large board on his shoulder, a second, mounted on the shoulders of a third, swung himself upon the projecting window, and taking up the board from the first, reared it above the door; all which was done in about the space of a minute. After this they stood before the house, and contemplated their work with suppressed laughter, whilst I, curious

to know what they really were about, not only stopped, but went a few paces forward towards them.

All at once they became aware of my presence, on which two of them, who somewhat resembled my friend Doctor Burbus, both in person and manner, came up to me, and with anything but courteousness demanded what I was doing there? I replied angrily, and a quarrel began. Just as one of them had snatched my cap from my head, the others who had remained in the shadow of the house, advanced to the middle of the street, and it seemed likely that I should fare but badly, when I heard myself addressed by a well-known deep voice in these words:

“Eh, eh! That is no other than my young patient! Whither away, most worthy apprentice?”

I was greatly rejoiced to see the doctor here, and complained to him of the behaviour of his companions. The doctor, having confessed that I had reason for so doing, introduced me to the whole party, and then giving his word for my good behaviour, I was permitted to accompany them, and was henceforth to have the privilege of taking part in their noble *fun* — *Ulken*, as they called it — which, however, was but another name for mischief, as the respectable Susanne Kehlricht would the next morning discover by the transformation of her sign.

As regarded any further fun, however, the heavens seemed to oppose it. Thick clouds which had suddenly gathered above our heads, came down in rain and sleet, so as to render it extremely unpleasant to remain longer out of doors, on which account it was agreed that we should all quietly go home.

Hence it was that in company with these merry fellows, I came into the immediate neighbourhood of our house, and no little was my anxiety about entering at so late an hour. As we passed the stone figure, we suddenly heard a hoarse barking close to the feet of the old fellow; and the doctor, who put forth his hand to ascertain what it was, drew it back suddenly, saying his finger was bitten. The cause was soon apparent; our fat old poodle, Fanny, had by some oversight been shut out of doors.

The doctor in the meantime made a noose in his pocket-handkerchief, and putting the dog's neck into it, drew her from her hiding-place; the doctor merrily relating to his companions how, precisely because of this very dog, I had lost the good will of my master, and further that it was the favourite of my two mortal enemies, Miss Barbara and Phillip, that therefore she ought to be punished in an exemplary manner for the offence of being found out of doors at so late an hour. On this the party held a short council of war, and some one in the excitement of the moment shouting *à la lanterne*, two of the party immediately set off to break open the lock and lower the chain by which the street-lamp was suspended, which was at once done.

So far I had in my astonishment allowed the business to proceed; but in this fearful moment I sprang between them and their victim, seized the dog, and declared that rather than consent to the death of the poor little animal, I would shout for help to the police.

Burbus laughing came over to my side, saying they would adopt some other mode of making an example of her. The street-lamp, therefore, being lowered and the light extinguished, the dog was shut in the lamp,

which was large enough for that purpose, and the whole machinery hoisted up again.

During this execution of Lynch law, the heavens themselves made their disapprobation apparent. A tremendous storm of sleet again came on, and we were wet to the skin. The groaning street-lamp shook above our heads, and the poor dog, terrified and uncomfortable, broke forth into a dismal howling which resounded through the silent street.

The company now separated, and I allowed myself to be persuaded by the doctor to go to his room in order to reach my chamber by means of the plank bridge. Scarcely, however, had we reached the shadow side of his house, than we heard the sound of footsteps approaching down the street, and then recognised in the person who came along, carefully picking his way, no other than my master, who was returning home from his club. All at once he stopped in the middle of the street, turned his umbrella aside, and listened aloft, for he had caught the sound of the poor dog's lamentation. After looking around in all directions, without making any discovery, he fancied that he must have been mistaken, and advanced quietly to his shop-door. But scarcely had he unlocked it, when the poor little thing again announced her presence in the most lamentable manner. Again he stepped into the street, and gazed observantly around him; but again everything was silent and dark. I could see everything distinctly, and how he at length, shaking his head, went into the house. We, on this, crept forward, and peeping through the cracks of the shop-shutters, saw him enter his counting-house and

light a candle. Now, thought we, he will go and look for Fanny in her usual sleeping place.

We were right; he did exactly as we supposed; and now again came to the door, and looked round with the lighted candle. A gust of wind, however, just then coming down the street, not only blew out his light but violently agitating the street-lamp, again the dog began to howl most dismally.

As my master now went into the house I besought of Burbus to let me hasten to his room, and so get across to mine and be in bed, as, in all probability, Mr. Reissmehl would rouse the whole house.

We therefore hurried upstairs into his room, I ran at once to the window to shove the plank across, and looking down perceived that my master with his candle was on the first floor, and presently afterwards that he was in his sister's chamber. I now shoved the board across to my window which fortunately was open, the doctor held the end firm, and I mounted astride upon it, in order to work myself over.

But by this time Miss Reissmehl also was up, and having received her brother's information regarding the dog, unfortunately opened the window to look out, at the very moment in which I commenced my aerial transit. In my first dismay, at the sight of her night-capped head looking from the window with a lighted candle in her hand, I thought of nothing but shoving myself back again, and taking refuge in the doctor's room. This was a mistake. If I had remained perfectly still she would have perceived nothing. As it was, the creaking of the board drew her attention. She looked up, and beholding a figure suspended as between heaven and earth, set up a loud cry of "Murder! Thieves!"

and in her terror, let the candlestick drop from her hand, into the darkness between the two houses.

The wonder was that I did not follow the candlestick. However, again taking vigorous hold of the plank I recommenced my journey over the gulf, and was already close to my own window when I heard the door between our two rooms open, and beheld my master enter my chamber with an old sword in his hand followed by Phillip armed with a stout stick.

This was the most horrible moment of my life. Behind me was the doctor loudly laughing, for he could see all that went forward.

Mr. Reissmehl had already seized me by the collar before he was aware that it was his own apprentice who had thrown the whole house into such alarm.

Could any one blame him if he now dragged me into the room in no very gentle fashion and administered to me several very palpable knightly blows with the old sword, much in the style of the ancient guilds when the apprentice took up his citizen rights.

Phillip denounced me unsparingly and Miss Reissmehl, who now, hastily attired, made her appearance on the scene, advised her brother at once to turn me out of doors.

After what had occurred I should have made no objection to this, but Mr. Reissmehl, satisfied for the present, simply ordered me to leave the house the first thing in the morning. But I did not wait for morning. No sooner was his back turned than I again sprang to the window and recrossed to the doctor's room.

Phillip gazed after me speechlessly, and I, as my parting word, told him where the unhappy little dog

was to be found. Thus I spoke my last farewell to the Reissmehl family.

CHAPTER XII.

Fanny in the Lamp.

As in a volcano, after a violent eruption, everything becomes gradually calmer, even though dull thunder sounds from within and flashes of lightning illumine the crater; exactly so was it after my exit through the window of my master's house into that of my neighbour Doctor Burbus. Phillip, in his scanty habiliments, seemed like a faint flash of lightning to dart from the window, as he leaned out, with some remains of the sympathy of old companionship to see whether I were not lying with broken bones in the abyss below.

Mr. Reissmehl clamoured up and down stairs, and wholly contrary to his usual practice was talking so loud that I could plainly hear in the doctor's chamber how mercilessly he was abusing me. Up in the dormer window of the roof a light was also perceptible, whence I inferred that the servant-girl was also aroused. Every thing indicated a general descent for the liberation of the poor captive.

Before long, therefore, all the lights were concentrated in the lower storey, and the doctor and I now leant from his window as far as possible to obtain a view of the lamp, which was visible only in dim outline, whilst the dull grinding of the rusty chain by which it hung and the doleful whining of the little prisoner came up to us very audibly.

Anon we saw the house-door open and a gleam of light flash into the street; then two figures emerged, evidently Mr. Reissmehl and Phillip, one of whom went below the lamp and the other to the box in the wall, in which was a notched wheel by means of which the lamp was lowered and drawn up again.

My worthy colleague who, as a peaceful citizen, had never probably had anything to do with the disturbance of street-lamp machinery, did not understand how to set about this business, and consequently lost some time by trying to open it by means of keys which would not answer the purpose.

At length, however he succeeded; the wheel turned round and the street-lamp moved downwards. The moment it touched the ground a female figure rushed from the house; the prisoner was released, and whining with joy was carried indoors in Miss Barbara's arms. Mr. Reissmehl followed, leaving Phillip alone to accomplish the hardest part of the work, the winding up again of the heavy lamp.

The fierce night wind blew along the street, whistling between the two houses, so that our hair was wildly blown over our faces and the next moment we heard the street-door violently bang to.

Whilst we were thus leaning from the window and hearing many a heavy sigh from poor Phillip, who was making the vainest attempts to accomplish his purpose, the doctor suddenly raised himself, and listened attentively into the night. His accustomed ear perfectly understood the meaning of a certain low clatter and shuffling on the street pavement to which I listened with perfect indifference. All the greater therefore was my horror when he again leaned over me

and whispered hastily and with, as it seemed to me, a sort of demoniac pleasure:

"There come the police! Unlucky Phillip! the most innocent man that ever tampered with a street-lamp, thou art undone!"

"Aha! luckily nabbed!" we now heard a voice exclaim, in a tone which so relentlessly disturbed the holy quietude of night, that there could be no doubt about its belonging to those who are permitted by law to shout aloud in the street. Another voice replied:

"Nay! then we've caught one of these villains at last! You gallows-bird, we'll find you a warm nest!"

We could only distinguish through the darkness now and then, the shine of an epaulette or the glance of a sabre. Phillip, who probably at this moment was petrified with terror, must have let go the handle of the iron crank, for we all at once heard it revolving rapidly, groaning at every turn, till down came the lamp with a ringing crash upon the pavement and was broken to shivers.

At this moment we beheld Phillip flee, like a hunted deer to the house of his employer, but before he could reach the threshold he was again in the hands of the police, who forcibly dragged him away. It was in vain that he asserted his innocence; in vain he repeated that he was Mr. Reissmehl's assistant. In vain the maid-servant who was now at the open door, but whose candle was again blown out, sent forth a ringing cry of alarm, and again rushing into the house shouted to her master to come to the rescue; Phillip was already hurried off, and his cries for help, borne away by the whistling wind, could not reach the ears of his un-

happy master, who now could do no less than anathematize the whole generation of apprentices.

My expulsion from the house of my employer had not caused such a beating of the heart, nor such an acute sense of moral dissatisfaction and remorse as now I experienced on seeing this really innocent man in the clutches of justice.

The police! this word fell with a horrible significance upon my ear and sent a cold shudder through me. I had never yet come into contact with this important institution, but the impression of my earliest youth regarding it was by no means impaired. When the threat of every possible punishment was vain to make us children quiet and obedient, nothing more was necessary than to say that the police should fetch us in the evening and we were as still as mice. I could never think of these men in their blue coats and red collars, their great hats and canes, except in connection with a filthy, cellar-like hole which was below an old tower near our house, in which all kinds of dirty, disreputable people were confined. And that Phillip should now be thrust into a place like this appeared to me so horrible that I could not participate in the merriment of the doctor; on the contrary I solemnly assured him, after a long struggle with myself, that I should set off to the police-office the first thing in the morning and make known the entire innocence of Phillip.

At this assertion the doctor burst into the loudest fits of laughter, and in order to console me, at least to-night, assured me in the most solemn manner, that as soon as it was morning Phillip would be released without the interference of anybody, because, he, these sacred representatives of justice were

much too enlightened now-a-days to punish an innocent man. He consoled me also, as regarded the filthy hole, by the assurance, that there were places of confinement suited to every rank of citizen in which they could repent of the follies of their youth.

CHAPTER XIII.

Stings of Conscience.

How much soever I might have been inspirited and comforted the night before by the resolve of freeing the unfortunate Phillip from confinement, at the sacrifice of my own self, yet no sooner had the early twilight of that gloomy March morning penetrated the chamber of Doctor Burbus, than the whole unfortunate history of the few hours previous appeared to me in a totally different light. I could not help shuddering when I thought, that perhaps even I myself, like my ex-colleague, might have to pass the next night in shameful imprisonment, especially as the doctor murmured in his beard several times before going to sleep, "Take care that you yourself don't get informed against!"

The weather was gloomy, and the little strip of sky which was visible from the window, and which I could see between the roofs as I lay on my miserable couch was of a dirty grey. Just as grey and as unpleasing seemed my short apprenticeship in the Reissmehl family. Nor could I help reproaching myself with having behaved very ill in many ways. Even as regarded Miss Barbara, I might have stood much better if I had only been wiser and more conciliating!

As regarded the female regency, at the head of which was my grandmother, I had no doubt but that I could manage to clear myself and begin life anew; but then, as far as the destination of my future was concerned, there my female relations held only a subordinate place and must appeal to, and submit to the decision of, my guardian, whose authority was supreme. This last reflection was especially disagreeable to me, and cast a gloom over all my more cheerful prospects. I knew my guardian only too well! Although there were good points in his character, and though he had most kindly provided for my education, yet I was afraid of him, and avoided him whenever I was able.

He was a short, undersized and somewhat corpulent man, with a sort of lizard-like activity which was startling, especially to us children. During the last war he had been appointed manager of a military depôt, and possessing naturally the love of order, it had been called forth to that degree, during his long service, that it degenerated into a perfect slavery to trifles. The acuteness of his eye was really awful, for instance when he came down to breakfast — and he was always the last — the moment his foot was heard on the stairs we were every one of us on the *qui vive* that nothing might be out of order in our dress or manners, and as he entered the room we all stood, ready to take our seats at table, as stiff as so many wax candles.

Even the very servants looked round to see that everything was in exact order and according to his commands, as he came down the stairs and past the kitchen-door. Indeed it depended upon this in some measure, whether he were in a good or bad humour.

Frequently also it would happen that on the preceding day something having vexed him when he had no opportunity of calling the culprit to account, he had tied a knot in a corner of his bright-coloured silk pocket-handkerchief as a reminder. But these very knots were a twofold misfortune to us; in the first place, they brought our misdeeds to his remembrance, and then as he generally forgot to untie the knots our sins still continued to stand against us. On occasion, therefore of his coming to breakfast in an ill humour, he would slowly draw forth his pocket-handkerchief, and never rightly remembering to whom the knots had reference, cast his eye sharply round the circle, and be or she who seemed to look with most apprehension towards the handkerchief he set down for the guilty one, and probably he was generally right. The sentence which the knotted handkerchief had called forth, was also frequently carried into execution by this very instrument; after which he would rise from the table and retire to his office, well satisfied by having brought the affairs of his family again into perfect order. But not liking, as he often said, to be the whole day through fault-finding and punishing, therefore when he had stormed himself out, he was the kindest man in the world. At such times he would tell us no end of funny stories, or play games with us; but even then we never ventured to trust too much to his good humour. The least inattention or want of skill would again call forth his anger. Hence his presence was very painful and oppressive not alone to me, but to his own children, and we only felt really happy and at our ease, when he had left the house. On such occasions, one of us would watch from a little side-window that

looked into the street, to see him actually turn the corner, when we at once indemnified ourselves, as it were, by all imaginable fun and mischief, in which very frequently, not only the old housekeeper, but even the two servant-girls joined us heartily.

I lived a year in his family, and though on the whole I was much better off there than afterwards with my aunts, yet I was heartily glad when I was able to leave. The old gentleman frequently punished me also in a way which was the severest possible. He took me with him into his office, frequently on Sundays and holidays, and set me down with a large book, and a sheet of paper which I had to write full, and if he discovered a single error as I went on, I had to begin it all over again, sometimes two or three times. And, more than that, I had to sit by his side, and if I were not industrious, or did not hold my pen right, he would slowly take up a long, flat ruler and give me a smart blow on my fingers. I was also frequently obliged to remain there when he went out; and as he locked the door upon me, these were the most dreadful times of any. This office was an old, gloomy room with small, iron-barred windows, through which light could scarcely penetrate, and there I sate, poor wretch as I was! my fingers black up to the knuckles with ink, and my tears falling upon my paper. And if, by any chance I attempted to dry my wet eyes with my hand, my whole face became smeared with ink, my shirt collar also frequently bearing traces of the same, whence again arose a new subject for disagreeable admonition.

Outside the counting-house, in the meantime, the happy holiday-making people would be streaming by,

I recognised the voices of my playfellows, and could hear how merry they all were, on their way, probably to a green airy meadow just opposite, our accustomed play-place. I could smell, in idea, the fragrance of the grass; I could hear above my head the whispering of the trees, whilst I sate amongst dust-covered yellow acts of parliament, the breeze, if it visited me at all, only stirring the old torn cotton blind, and disturbing the repose of innumerable moths.

These thoughts and recollections were very painful to me, as I lay upon the old mattress in Doctor Burbus's room. Still, when I recalled that time, it seemed almost like a May-day in comparison with the hurricane which I could foresee after all the dreadful occurrences of the past night.

Unhappy I! my grandmother, my aunt, my guardian, Phillip, and the police — all this made me so horribly uneasy, that in my distress of mind I awoke the doctor, though this was accomplished only after many fruitless endeavours.

At length, however, he raised his heavy head from the ragged pillow, gazed at me, and loudly yawning bade me a good morning.

"Ah, dear Doctor," I said, "I have not been able to sleep for thinking of last night. Don't you remember it? Don't you remember where Phillip is?"

"Oh yes," returned Doctor Burbus, in a hoarse and dry voice, "to be sure I do. Ha, ha, ha! Phillip the noble has exchanged the abode of true love for a lodging in quod!"

"Yes, but dear Doctor," returned I, "you said last night before going to sleep that Phillip might bring a charge against us, and then —"

"Quite right, most honourable," replied the doctor, as he raised himself in bed so that his two feet nearly touched the floor, where they angled about for a pair of old yellow slippers — "If Phillip suspects us — and for that I can give him credit — then we may be summoned before the court of public peace. Do you know anything of this institution?"

"Oh, good Heavens, no!" exclaimed I, feeling almost as if even then one of the blue-coated, red-collared officials had his hand upon me and was dragging me, a poor, defenceless victim, through the street.

"You see," continued the doctor, again yawning and now slipping into his old green velvet coat and casting a dull, comfortless look at the grey and cloudy sky, "the court of public peace is a very extraordinary appellation for this beneficent institution! Thither any two parties who have a quarrel are summoned by force, and brought before an old gentleman, who sits in a large arm-chair and is dreadfully tired of the whole thing. He listens quietly to the people, and after they have lustily abused each other, he endeavours to accommodate matters between them. But in that he very seldom succeeds. It is however of no consequence to him, and as soon as they come out of this court of peace, just as if they were agreed at least so far, they each run off to a different lawyer and so carry the affair before the general court of justice. But it seems to me that this business with Phillip will come into the police-court, another, and not less beneficent institution."

"And what will be done there, dear Doctor," demanded I, in a low voice.

"Yes, there," returned the doctor, "somewhat shorter

work will be made with our respectable Phillip. The police officers who have him in charge will state on oath, that they seized the accused at the very moment when he was engaged in destroying one of the royal street-lamps, and the punishment for that offence is as one, two, three! The director of police will say; indeed! shut up the law-book of police-punishment and pass sentence: *ergo conclusum* — three day's imprisonment and costs."

"But in Heaven's name!" I exclaimed, "Phillip is innocent!"

"That matters nothing, my most respectable! Time, place and circumstances, under which he was arrested, witness against him, and he may thank his stars that the crime of breaking a street-lamp is not punishable with death, otherwise he would have to be hanged."

"Nay, dear Doctor," I returned, "that we could never allow! I, or much more you, who know all about the affair, ought to go to the police-office and declare that Phillip is innocent. You need not implicate yourself," added I, "need not say that we had any hand in it; only that we happened accidentally to be present and can swear to his innocence!"

"Young man," said Burbus, very earnestly, as he sought about the room, for the iron vessel in which he usually made his coffee; "you speak great words very coolly. But don't take it amiss if I say, you don't understand anything about it. I, on the contrary, understand a great deal. Look you, if I were to put myself in so doubtful a position before the police, those very charming people would not be satisfied merely with my evidence, they would carry their insatiable inquisitiveness so far as to ask after my passport, my

place of abode, my certificate of residence, and so on, and then at last require precise information as to what were my present means of living in this town? Questions these on which, of a truth, I am not prepared to give any satisfactory information."

"Yes, but dear Doctor," I said, "if you will allow me, unreservedly to ask; you must have some means by which to pay people to whom you are somewhat in debt."

"Yes certainly," replied he, "pay my debts — yes sure — yes sure! There once was a time," continued he, as he lighted his spirit-lamp, "a time when I should not have been able to sleep, if I had left unpaid my evening-prayer to God. But that is a long time ago, and since those days of innocent childhood I have quite unlearned the duty of paying my debts."

Whilst the doctor thus spoke I had risen, gone to the window and looked up at the sky, along which dirty, grey clouds of ever changing form were hurried by the wind. The street was wet and muddy, and at the distance of a few paces from the Reissmehl's house, lay the shattered fragments of the street-lamp. Above, in the house of my former master, all was still and quiet, the window only of my bed-room remained open and the wind blowing in played with the bright-coloured cotton hangings of my former bed. It was an unlovely, disagreeable morning and I felt myself much in the same condition of feeling as when I woke in that very bed on the morning after the too copious draughts of Doctor Burbus's punch. Yet my depression of mind this morning was far worse — was a sense of a still deeper moral degradation, one which could not

now, as then, have been removed by Phillip's handful of sourkraut.

The doctor in the meantime, was preparing his coffee, the odour and appearance of which created no desire in me, all the less as I observed that his filtering-machine consisted of the lower end of a stocking foot sewn into an iron ring. But I could not prevent his pouring me out a cup, which he then compelled me to drink to keep out the cold of the morning.

The doctor smoked from a long pipe and threw himself again upon his bed, appearing to survey the unwholesome disorder of his room with no sense of dissatisfaction. I, on the contrary, could not help feeling a secret disgust, and if it had once amused me for a couple of hours to look at this dilapidated furniture, the grotesque witch-dance on the walls and the skeleton-comrade, that time was now passed and I began almost to feel a secret horror of, and repugnance to, the doctor, who was always to be found with these hideous surroundings, and who seemed to take a pleasure in them.

In the meantime, the glance of the doctor, as he gazed round, and ran his fingers through his hair and beard, became ever less and less one of merriment and at length assumed a grave, I might almost say sorrowful expression, such as I had never seen on his countenance before. He beat a tune with his feet against the bed's foot, after which he gazed for a moment through the window; a fine, cold rain was now falling. He passed his hand over his forehead and sighed deeply. Then fixing his eye upon me he said,

"If they have expelled you out of yonder house, and you have nothing but the most serious disagreeables

to expect from your family, yet you are — God knows! a very fortunate fellow in comparison with me. Upon my word, I assure you that I often feel myself to be one of the most miserable of mortals. Who, is so alone in the world, so horribly alone as I am! I have no means by which I can live respectably, nor have I learned anything by which to acquire these means! I am worse off a great deal than the day-labourer or the porter who can earn his daily bread by the sweat of his brow. You may believe me, my dear fellow, that of all the foolish things I have done in my time — and their name is legion — the most unaccountable and the greatest is that during the eight years of my student-life, I never profited a single idea by all the arts and sciences which are spread abroad on God's great earth!"

"But," returned I quickly, "you were a long time at the university studying."

"Yes, of a truth," replied the doctor, "I was at the university; but I soon ran through the little property that my parents had left me. To be sure it was very inconsiderable, so much so indeed as not to prevent my suffering great anxiety and even want; for if you spread a small sum of money over sixteen university terms, the sections are but very insignificant for each. There, as I said before, I entered myself at the university, but I did not trouble myself much about the hard work of studying. And thus, young man," continued he, now speaking with grave earnestness, "you see before you a man of two-and-thirty, who knows nothing thoroughly excepting how to act as president at a drinking-bout, to fence with the rapier, and to strike three and a half chords on a guitar."

As the doctor spoke these last words, he started up hastily and walked up and down the room.

"And when the anger of your family, because of your having to leave Reissmehl and Company, shall have somewhat abated," continued he, "I beseech of you, in Heaven's name, to let yourself be quietly apprenticed to some other grocery-business and, don't take it ill, if I advise you, to behave better in a new situation than you have done in this. It is to be hoped that there will not be then any Doctor Burbus in the neighbourhood, because such people as he, are extremely dangerous to you young fellows. Apropos, I remember having said to you, one fine evening, that it would be much better for you to abandon your shop-career and devote yourself instead to study; but at the present moment when I am looking at life rationally I conjure you, to devote yourself earnestly to that which you have undertaken. Besides, your relations do not appear to be able to supply you with much money, nor yet afterwards with that influence which is necessary for professional success. Perhaps, however, they may be sufficiently well-to-do to enable you to open a respectable little shop in which you may be enthroned like a second Reissmehl. —

"If in my younger days," continued he after a short pause, during which he passed his hand first over his forehead and then over his eyes; "if there had been any one who could have placed things rationally before me — instead of that my mother would hear of nothing but making a learned man of me — then I might, I say, have been what my forefathers had been, for I know not how many generations — the tenant of an ancient mill. I too might then have followed this re-

spectable calling and at this very day been wearing a white, dusty jacket and leading a calm and happy life. But that is all over and past, irrecoverably past! My father is dead; my mother died without seeing her gentlemanly son distinguish himself as a scholar; the mill has passed into other hands — and I am nothing in the world, but a poor broken-down fellow, a wretched vagabond!”

With this last word the doctor threw himself upon his bed with such violence, that it cracked in every joint.

Then as if determined to put away all these gloomy reflections by main force, he began to sing with all his might the well-known song:

The season is fine, and the brown beer is foaming.

He sang several verses without stopping, whilst I sate by, shaken to the very heart's core by the words of this strange being.

Presently however he sprang up again from the bed, and seizing me by both shoulders, said in as merry a voice as possible.

“Now, my best beloved apprentice, flee home to Zion, and keep yourself quiet and out of sight in your little chamber for the next two or three days. I have always had a good appetite, and shall very likely have to eat up your share of the nasty police-soup. Now go; it is eight o'clock and leave me to my fate. But before I turn my back on this sinful town, which I perhaps may do very soon, I shall come quietly and see you, in order that I may have the pleasure of saying good-bye to you — you young half-prodigal son!”

So saying, he opened the door and shook me by

the hand, and I, deeply cogitating, walked down-stairs; hearing as I went the voice of the doctor, finishing the song which he had begun

And when life is over — let me not be carried,
My friends, to the churchyard, where dull folks are buried,
No, down in the cellar make, make my last bed,
I always was thirsty, with a cask at my head!

I felt in that state of mind, when the very heart seems ready to break.

I hurried into the street, and the cold icy rain which was falling did not tend to raise my spirits; I was also uncomfortably aware of sundry holes in my boots. Although under these circumstances the natural impulse would have been to seek shelter as soon as possible, still I halted for a moment before the shop, where the old stone figure stood with the long nose. I felt as if unwilling to leave him and nodded kindly towards him. Ah! perhaps he was the only one in the whole family who saw me going away with regret; at least so I fancied, and who can blame me, if in the strangely depressed state of my feelings, I was willing to fancy the waterdrops which rolled down his stony countenance were compassionate, leave-taking tears?

CHAPTER XIV.

Return Home. Woe's me!

ALTHOUGH it was no great distance from the Reissmehls' to my grandmother's house, and I began at first to walk rapidly, yet I did not get there very quickly. The nearer I came to my goal the greater became my anxiety and the slower my progress. My good old

grandmother had certainly no idea of the late occurrences, and even if she had become fully aware, from my conversation of last evening, that I was very much dissatisfied with my situation and if she herself were willing that my indentures should be cancelled, still there was in the background the obstinate determination of my guardian, which stood up like a mighty rock upon which all our wishes and resolves might be wrecked. But let me take as short steps, and delay my progress, as I would, yet at length I entered the street in which the house of my aunt stood. I already saw it before me, saw the window of the shop, and next to it the window of my grandmother's room, where the good old lady was now probably taking her coffee, preparatory to reading a chapter in the Bible, which was her morning and evening sacrifice.

I knew how quiet and peaceful everything looked, at this early hour, in that room. My grandmother was then generally in her very best humour; she would take out one of the packets of letters which lay in the drawer of her table, generally the one which was tied up with green silk cord. This packet was her sacred treasury, her archives. How often had she read my aunt and myself extracts from them, and I remembered so well that the letter which lay uppermost was from my deceased grandfather, that in which he had made his first timid declaration of love, and beginning with the address; "Most estimable and highly-respected young lady!" Other letters in the same strain followed, and then came the marriage-certificate, and after that, a year later in date, the baptismal register of my mother, as her eldest daughter. Before long however the archives assumed a sorrowful cha-

acter; there was one letter, which had come from a far distant place, which reported the death of a brother of my grandmother, amongst strangers and in want; others, in quick succession, containing locks of hair, and dried flowers, interspersed with gilded album-leaves. Then my father had written with much joy to say that he had a son born, and immediately afterwards a letter sealed with black announced, that my mother had died a few days afterwards. My grandmother had very often shewn me this letter, always adding:

"You see, my lad, the blessing of your family ended with that letter; you have become more and more unmanageable, more and more of a good-for-nothing fellow!"

I stood at the street-corner in the rain, in a sort of day-dream, but when I remembered that my grandmother had called me a good-for-nothing, I came again, as it were, to myself, and was just in the act of hastening to the house, when a man having evidently the same intention came up the street, and again my speed was slackened. Although I saw no more of his person, than below the shelter of a fiery red umbrella, the laps of a brown coat, white stockings and shoes with steel buckles, yet I recognised in a moment that this was Mr. Reissmehl. Now he was at the house-door, and lowered and closed the umbrella, then opened and reclosed it several times to shake off the dripping rain; after this he glanced up at the grey, cloudy sky, as if to see if there were any sign of blue, and then looked down at his white stockings to see if they shewed any grey, after which he disappeared with a great stride under the door-way.

I felt a choking sensation in my throat; and if on the one hand it was not altogether unpleasant to me that Mr. Reissmehl should go beforehand and make known my misdeeds, yet on the other, nothing would now induce me to go home at once. What should I do? To continue here standing out in the rain; with my thin coat already wet through and myself so thoroughly starved that my teeth chattered in my head, was quite impossible. I had no acquaintance to whom I could turn; the cathedral therefore occurred to my mind. It stood at no great distance and its wide, spacious aisle had often served as a place of resort for us school-lads. Thither therefore I hastened, and the subdued warmth of the vast interior felt to me inexpressibly comfortable after the wet and cold atmosphere of the streets. I stole into a little side chapel and seated myself in an old, carved stall, opposite to which stood an image of the Virgin with the child Jesus in her arms.

I had not sat here long before the extreme cold which had seemed to penetrate bone and marrow, gave place to intense heat which pervaded my whole frame, at the same time that a violent oppression on my head, compelled me to close my eyes, and presently I fell asleep. During this sleep I had very strange dreams. Everything which had occurred to me during the last few days, at the Reissmehl's, was again represented to my mind in the wildest and most horribly distorted manner. Now it seemed to me that Miss Barbara had plunged me into a frozen sea where I must perish of cold; but no sooner had my limbs begun to shiver than the ice was transformed into glowing fire and the most burning heat consumed me. Now and then I half awoke out of my sleep, and there, lay expanded

before me the vast empty church, in which my feeble glance could distinguish nothing excepting the holy Virgin with the child in her arms.

How long I really sat, half sleeping, in this fevered dream I know not. At length, however, I perceived a delicious scent in my nostrils, and as I opened my eyes and gazed around I believed nothing else than that the mother of God had descended and stood with the child by the hand before my seat. I saw, as she bent half over me and held a little bottle to my nostrils that she had a sweet and lovely countenance, a countenance so kind and beautiful as I had never seen before, and as I regarded her as a supernatural being I again closed my eyes, in order to give myself up wholly to her guidance. But the child that stood at her side, a young girl, and who was as sweet and beautiful as her mother, said:

"Oh mamma, that poor boy won't die, will he?"

These words brought me again to myself; and I re-opened my eyes and raised myself slowly in my seat.

I then saw distinctly that it was not the holy Virgin who stood before me, but a lady who was quite a stranger to me, and more beautifully and delicately dressed than I had ever seen before. The girl, who now held her hand, appeared to be her daughter, for she greatly resembled her, excepting that the mother had black hair and the girl, thick, fair locks. Behind them stood a man in a long blue overcoat with gilt buttons, who held two umbrellas under his arm.

"Who are you, my child?" inquired the lady from me, "and how come you here, in the church, in your wet clothes? Why do you not go home if you are ill?"

The lady asked very rational questions, which I could not adequately answer. I must have told her a great deal to make it intelligible why I had come hither in my wet clothes; but I could not do this. I also felt that she was right in speaking of me as ill, for when I rose up, saying that now I would go home, I could not stand. The pillars of the church the painted windows, every thing seemed to be going round with me. I only heard that the lady inquired still further:

"But in Heaven's name, my poor fellow, where do you live?"

After this I have an indistinct recollection of mentioning the name of our street, as well as the house where my aunt lived. All the rest was to me as a dream. I believe, however, that the man with the umbrellas took me up in his arms and placed me in a coach. The lady and the pretty young girl also took their seats in the carriage and the latter held the little bottle of delicious scent to my nose. We were driven through two or three streets and suddenly I saw my aunt as well as my old grandmother making curtsies, after which I sank into a deep sleep.

CHAPTER XV.

Illness.

AFTER the occurrences which took place, as I have related, in the cathedral, I fell into heavy sleep, during which the ghostly visions which filled my mind as I sat in the stall before the image of the Divine Mother, continued for some time to haunt me. By degrees,

however, they became fainter and faded away, and when I now and then opened my eyes, and saw before me a row of medicine bottles, some bulky and others long-necked, they conveyed no idea of their reality to my mind. These bottles, with their dark-brown, almost black contents, and their white labels tied round their necks, were to me no other than dignified clergymen preaching to savage hordes.

I lay in the chamber which I used to occupy before I went apprentice, and by degrees the well-known old furniture exercised a beneficial influence on me. By little and little my consciousness was recalled to the reality of myself, and my surroundings; objects resumed their proper character and proportions; and my mind steadied itself upon that to which it had formerly been most accustomed. Looking outwards from my bed I faced the two windows of the room, the blinds of which were painted with beautiful landscapes. On the one a stately castle with lofty walls and towers, built on a vast rock, filled the background; whilst in front flowed a broad river, over which people were being conveyed in a boat; beyond the river a deeply worn road wound up to the castle, along which a company of people, armed knights and travellers, were journeying.

The second picture represented a pleasant valley in which stood a water-mill; the water which poured down from the wear and over the mill-wheel was so naturally painted that the very wheel seemed turning. The miller, in his white pointed cap, was leaning from window, smoking his pipe. The foreground of the scene was the mill-garden, in which children were at

play; and the whole was surrounded by ancient gloomy forest scenery through which deer wandered.

I knew every stone and every tree in these pictures. I knew also a great deal more than the painter had represented in them. The winding, old road, lost itself to ordinary observers, behind the hill on its way to the castle, but I knew exactly how it went forward, how it looked and all the various objects it presented by the way. I knew that another company of knights was riding along it in advance of that which followed. And what a landscape it was, which I pictured to myself, as I seemed to stand on the topmost turret of the castle, looking up the valley and down. A more beautiful scene the whole earth could not present!

But the mill was my favourite; for it represented to my imagination a real place which my aunt had often described to me, and which I pictured according to my fancy.

She had often told me about a cousin who lived many miles from the town at a mill which lay in the midst of woods. In her youth she sometimes paid long visits there, and she would give me such charming histories of those friendly people and of the quiet life of the valley that she excited in me a perfect longing to ramble about those dark oak-woods and to see the deer that were its sole inhabitants. When I looked therefore at the blind which represented the mill, I could fancy I was there. I wandered through the whole house, I seated myself beside the foaming mill-wheel and had pleasant talk with the old miller at the window.

Already, during a former illness, these two pictured

blinds had been a great source of enjoyment to me. I could cradle myself in romantic dreams at the knight's castle; ascend there into a higher sphere, and then come down again into the actualities of life at the mill. So now again, no sooner had I regained my consciousness, than the two landscapes were the only things with which I could occupy or amuse my mind. Although I knew the people who surrounded me, yet I gave them but very little either of my attention or my thoughts. I was far too weak, and my nervous system too much shaken, to be capable of more, and after I had wandered for a few minutes in my landscapes I closed my eyes and again slept.

It may easily be understood that in the meantime every member of the family — my aunts, as well as my god-parents, and our most intimate acquaintance — took the deepest interest in my fate. My grandmother did that which she had not done for ten years — had her table and her chair with its cotton-covered cushions, removed from their accustomed place and carried up into my room. Yes, she regularly emigrated, with the French general's silver spectacles and the little snuff-box of the deceased Countess, and the never-to-be-forgotten archives under her arm, and had encamped by my bed-side.

She being the head of the house, the whole female group of our inmates gathered, as a matter of course, around her. From this cause, therefore, my illness had acquired in the first instance an unusual importance. The widow of the tailor who occupied the third storey of our house, as well as the wife of the cobbler who thumped his leather in our back-premises, were daily visitors to inquire after my health, a mark of neigh-

bourly attention, which, apart from my sufferings, was worth the good coffee and delicate liqueurs which my aunt liberally dispensed on such occasions.

If I have not yet remembered poor Miss Schmied amongst these visitors of the sick, let it not be attributed to ingratitude on my part, but rather because I desire to give a few extra words to her self-sacrificing devotion. When I first recognised her, after having passed out of my delirious state — I had just been paying a little visit to the castle and the mill — there she stood at the foot of the bed with a capacious medicine bottle in one hand and a silver spoon in the other, silently watching me. It seemed to me that she, poor soul, was greatly altered; her countenance was very pale and her dress, which had always been exceedingly neat and nice, now, especially her cap, looked quite the contrary. Ah, I did not know that this was the consequence of her having sat up the whole of the last night by my bed! My grandmother, who was sitting enthroned in quiet majesty by her table, now turned her head towards my bed, adjusting her spectacles the while.

"But Schmied," said she, "there is a time for everything; and it still wants a quarter to three."

"Ah, my dear lady," returned Miss Schmied, and I could see, spite of my closed eyes, how hers were filled with tears, "do leave me to myself! I don't mind standing a few minutes, so that I may only give the medicine at the right time; the doctor has expressly ordered it."

"They who will not be advised cannot be helped," murmured my grandmother, and again I went to sleep.

Every time I awoke during the day, and mostly

during the night also, there stood poor Miss Schmied gazing mournfully at me, and to my great shame I must confess, that the poor soul did not receive many kind words from me; nay one day I even grievously offended her.

When I was in health her ever-ready tears had often considerably affected me; and as then, for the most part, they went hand in hand, with my interests, it was natural that I should tolerate them. Now, however, I know not why, but her sorrowful countenance and floods of tears produced a most unpleasant effect upon me.

One day I mentioned this to my grandmother.

"Habit, bad habit!" she replied calmly, and then mentioned it to poor Schmied.

The good soul herself afterwards confided to me how terribly she had been wounded by my remarks, and how she had replied to my grandmother, whilst the tears poured down like a little waterfall, "Oh my dear lady; I am by nature of a very firm character, but when the child whom I have cared for from his very birth, lies suffering before my eyes, I must cry, even though our very Lord himself forbade it!"

I had great reason however to be thankful to her as regarded the Reissmehl affair, for she never rested till my grandmother was convinced that it was not the right place for me.

"Yes, my dear lady," sobbed the wary woman, "I have always said, as you know, that Miss Barbara was not a creditable person, and to send that poor child into that gloomy, uncomfortable house, which is no better than a haunted house! — No, it could never succeed!"

"No, no, it never could!" chimed in my aunt, the tailor's widow, and the shoemaker's wife, in one breath, "it was not likely to succeed."

My guardian, however, who had the honour of a tolerably good acquaintance with me in his gloomy counting-house would probably not be of the same opinion. He had written a long letter to my grandmother, but in consideration of my present weak state, they only read to me the kindest and most conciliatory portions of it. From these, however, I was able to perceive that no inconsiderable storm was brewing for me; and as the conclusion of the letter led us to infer, that it might burst over my head in the person of my uncle and guardian before many days had passed.

Thanks to the tender and unremitting care and attention of my relatives my recovery was by no means slow. After four days the doctor pronounced me out of danger, and ordered me strengthening things — a subject which led to no small contention amongst my devoted female friends. But with that I will not trouble the reader.

My worthy master, Mr. Reissmehl, spite of my bad conduct and disgraceful pranks, called now and then to inquire after me, nay even, judging from the description which our maid-servant gave, Phillip himself must have come on the same errand.

I would willingly have given up the honour of these inquiries if I could, by so doing, have known something regarding the fate of my friend Doctor Burbus. I could not suppose that he had left the town, because he had solemnly promised me to come and see me before he set out on his journey. I was exceedingly fond of the doctor. My friend, in comparison

with the dry, comfortless, stony desert of the Reissmehl family-life, seemed to me a green, luxuriant meadow, even though it might be overrun with weeds. I was not only tortured by my friendship for him, but I wanted to know how the affair of the street-lamp had terminated. When I thought of the police-court a cold shudder ran through me, and I saw in spirit the poor doctor in the pitiless clutches of the law.

Under these circumstances it was a necessity with me to place before my relatives his friendship for me, in the brightest light possible. My first step, therefore, was to win over the heart of poor old Miss Schmied to the doctor's side. This done, she began to work on my aunt, and succeeded so well, that even my grandmother felt somewhat kindly disposed towards him. With her, however, it was the name which interested her more than any thing which I could relate of his good qualities.

"Burbus!" said she, and took a pinch out of the countess's box, "Burbus!" repeated she, and shoved up the general's spectacles, as was her wont when she wished to reflect.

"Don't you remember, mother?" said my aunt, "the old miller from whom Cousin Lamprecht bought the mill, was named Burbus!"

"So it was," returned my grandmother still pondering, "I have often been to see him with my late husband. Yes, to be sure! the mill belonged to our parish, and it *was* Burbus!"

"Yes, sure!" exclaimed I, "he once told me that his father was a miller."

"And now I do remember also," continued my

grandmother, "that there was a little round-faced, rosy lad that used to play before the door."

"Yes, grandmother," I said, "that would be he!"

"And now everything has gone badly with him!" sighed good old Schmied; "poor, poor child!"

"I beg of you Schmied," exclaimed my grandmother, in a tone of vexation, "don't begin wailing again! What child do you mean? The miller's son must now be thirty years old!"

Miss Schmied pressed her hand upon her heart and was silent, whilst her glance seemed to say, "Ah, why has our Lord made me so sensitive!"

CHAPTER XVI.

Betrothal and Magnanimity.

A DEEP quietness pervaded the Reissmehl family after the catastrophe of the night which has been recorded. Fanny lay in her basket and slept away the fatigues of the street-lamp adventure, now and then, however, giving a shudder and setting up a little howl in dreamy remembrance of the horrible time. Phillip was no worse for his bad night in the police stronghold. The warm reception which he had received from Miss Reissmehl when brought home triumphantly by her brother, and the good breakfast that followed, so completely restored him, that in the course of the forenoon he stood as usual behind the counter in all his glory. His straw-coloured hair was again smoothed on each side his head, he wore a new cotton jacket, and in place of his old slippers a pair of new ones, the gift of Miss Barbara, so that both his heart and his feet were warm.

Towards noon, however, he became again greatly excited by some news which he received, and which evidently was connected with the occurrences of the preceding night. A servant from the next house who came into the shop for some little article told him, that Doctor Burbus had that morning been summoned to appear before the police, but had excused himself on account of illness; that about an hour afterwards the police sergeant had come himself to ascertain whether it really were so, but by that time the doctor had disappeared, and was no where to be found; and furthermore that now, at this very time the clerk of the court, and his assistants were up in his room appraising, and taking an inventory of his goods, which would not be a very long job.

Phillip clasped his hands when he heard this and his first thought was that even the law did justice sometimes; his second, however, was pity for the man who had so often cruelly sinned against him.

Mr. Reissmehl, who had been turned out of his usually mechanical course of daily action by his early visit to the police-office, and to my grandmother, did not that morning take his garden promenade till about eleven, immediately after a long conversation with his sister, and even then his mind was apparently greatly excited. For the first time in twenty years, he forgot to set his watch by the old sundial, or to take his pinch of snuff at the accustomed place; scarcely looked at the large pear-tree and patted none of the young with his open hand. My dismissal from the house was however by no means the cause of this distraction of mind, which in reality arose from a conversation which he had had with his sister. She had opened her over-

flowing heart to him; had confessed that Phillip loved her, and as she fully returned his affection, she had now determined to accept his offered hand, and to become his wife, if her brother saw no objection to take his former assistant into partnership.

Mr. Reissmehl pondered on this proposal as he walked up and down the garden. His mind was deeply exercised on the subject. To and fro he went; and he, usually so careful not to have a speck on his white stockings and clean shoes, now stalked through the puddles with the most perfect unconsciousness till he was splashed like a courier. If he were not particularly pleased with the idea of Phillip as a brother-in-law, still he remembered that his sister could command one-half of the property, and if it came to a separation he probably might not readily meet with an assistant who in all respects would suit him as well as Phillip did. This consideration disposed Mr. Reissmehl at length to regard more favourably the wishes of his shopman; nevertheless he determined in the first place to try the question by omen and as he either did not know or had forgotten the exact number of fruit-trees which grew in a row, he went down the whole length of them asking, "Shall I or, shall I not? Yes! No!" and when he reached the last tree, an unquestionable "Yes," decided the omen and Mr. Reissmehl, now ready for action, went back into the house to seek for his sister.

She was just then busy on the mysterious first floor; the windows were open and she was dusting the old worm-eaten and curiously-carved furniture with a silk handkerchief; a dozen chairs and a table were already rubbed and she was now polishing the frame of an old copper-plate engraving of the garden of Eden,

in which Adam and Eve were enjoying their yet unbroken felicity, when the door opened behind her, and her brother entered leading Phillip by the hand.

It was not till Mr. Reissmehl had said, in the gentlest voice possible: "Dear sister," that she was aware of their entrance and then quickly turning round a crimson blush overspread her countenance. Phillip also, who knew very well what was coming, felt himself greatly embarrassed. He ran his right hand through his pale hair and scraped backwards with his left foot.

"Dear sister," again began Mr. Reissmehl, "what would be the use of many words when your hearts perfectly understand each other? Mr. Phillip," — and he now used the term *Mr.* with reference to his shopman for the first time. "Mr. Phillip has been undeviatingly useful to me in my business; he will still continue to be so, and we will later arrange the conditions under which the old firm of Reissmehl and Co. shall be continued under our combined names. I give you my entire consent. May you be happy!"

The good old gentleman was evidently affected by these words, hence, having so spoken, he instantly turned round and left the room.

"May you be happy!" repeated Phillip enthusiastically and seemed to fan the air with his long arms.

Miss Reissmehl, however, seeming about to faint, Phillip caught her in his arms, as any other betrothed lover would have done, and much tender interchange of thought took place, with which however we have nothing to do — suffice it to say that the happy Phillip glancing upwards through the window and seeing that of Doctor Burbus's chamber, the conversation

turned upon that worthy. The preceding day and night, spite of their terrible incidents, were again discussed, and, as it appeared, not with unmeasured severity, at least as far as Doctor Burbus was concerned.

"Yes, yes, there's an end of him," said Phillip, pointing up to the window of his former neighbour, at which one of the appraisers, a turner by trade, made his appearance at that moment, in the act of valuing the pipes which the doctor had left behind him.

Phillip, had, in a few words, given his betrothed an account of the doctor's flight, and now, he said, people were valuing his effects.

Whether it was the joyful reflection that the doctor could no longer annoy or injure him, or that he felt a generous pity for the unfortunate man who was a fugitive in the world, or that at this solemn moment the heart of Phillip was very tender, I know not; this however is certain, he spoke kindly of the doctor, and appearing saddened by the consideration of his fate, drooped his head upon his breast; then again he suddenly raised it for a noble and beautiful thought was in his mind.

"Oh Barbara," said he, "if your heart — *thy* heart, I would say, only felt as much disposed to forgiveness as mine does — of which I do not doubt, because I know that thou art more noble-minded than I am — then let us, in return for all the mischievous and unkind tricks that the doctor has played us, heap coals of fire on his head — even though, now that he has run away, he should never know a word about it! Let us by a beautiful action somewhat atone for the injustice of which he is guilty. Barbara permit me to go up there and buy that skeleton which we will then quickly lay to rest in consecrated earth."

Miss Reissmehl was shocked at the mention of the skeleton, which she again in imagination seemed to behold, standing at the window with the long label in its jaws. Nevertheless Phillip's proposal seemed so noble and generous that she assented, and taking from her pocket her large house-keeping purse, empowered him to make the horrible purchase, begging merely that her brother might never hear a word about it, "for," said she, "he knows so little about the poetry of life that he could not understand this beautiful action."

Another condition also there was, namely, that the skeleton should not be brought within her gaze.

Phillip went immediately to the next house and into the doctor's room. The people had just finished their business, and the few poor effects, which, though estimated at their full value, made but the small sum-total of about eight thalers, were now ready for removal. Upon them however the woman of the house, standing at the door with her unpaid bill in her hand had already made an attachment. Of the various articles in this remarkable Inventory need here merely be mentioned the doctor's books, namely two volumes of the *Conversations-Lexicon*; one volume, called the *Watchman of Zion*, a dream-book; a *Student-song-book*; and seven volumes of Sir Walter Scott's novels, printed at Stuttgart.

Phillip made his proposal. He had a commission to buy the skeleton and would pay its full value. The appraiser had set down this dismal article at five shillings. He thought, however, that to a person who had a fancy for such things, it must be worth more and consulting with his assistant the turner, Phillip was told that it was valued at one pound. Without making

any objection, he drew forth his purse, paid down the money, and promising to send for the skeleton by-and-by, hastened away, feeling an unaccountable repugnance to remain in the former room of the doctor longer than was absolutely necessary.

The landlady was greatly amused by this purchase, and scarcely was Phillip at the bottom of the stairs than she said:

"I say, Mr. Appraiser, now that there thing is sold, I need not, I suppose, keep it a minute longer in the house?"

The officer replied, that if the purchaser did not fetch it away within a reasonable time, she might dispose of it as she would, only not turn it into the street, that he must object to in the name of the police.

"But I need not have it standing on my stairs?" asked the landlady, "and as for this room, in which I have had damage enough done already, I shall want it at once!"

"Then," said the policeman, "you'd better have it carried home."

This was just the permission which she wished the officer to give, and scarcely were the words out of his mouth than down-stairs she went, and presently returned with two apprentices from the shop and a large piece of canvass. In this latter the skeleton was rolled in somewhat mummy fashion, and the two youths were then ordered to carry it off into Mr. Reissmehl's shop.

This was a great mistake and led to no inconsiderable amount of discomfort and alarm. Mr. Reissmehl, who had but little knowledge of the poetry of life, as his sister had asserted, was both offended and disgusted by the whole affair. But we will not go into

the particulars. Every melancholy and dismal story comes to an end; nor was this any exception to the rule. The poor, unhappy human remains rested at length in holy ground, but not before Phillip had shed bitter tears of disappointment and mortification over the fact that a well-meant and noble intention should be misunderstood and bring forth nothing but anger and humiliation.

CHAPTER XVII.

Convalescence.

OF all these events I naturally knew nothing, but lay in my bed and either slept deeply or looked at the mill and the knight's castle.

Unhappily a relapse occurred in my illness. I passed a restless night and to the distress of poor Miss Schmied lay on the morrow in a high fever. Again my chamber was darkened for several days, and I distinguished no one except my friend by her suppressed weeping when she administered the medicines. It is true that now and then I noticed that other persons must be in the room, I even occasionally believed that I heard a deep voice which was not unknown to me. But I was too weak to be able to trace my thoughts, and all my recollections escaped me in the very moment when I thought that I had mastered them. One evening my fever somewhat abated, and towards morning I slept quite calmly, being, however, awakened by the ring of that deep voice, which said clearly and somewhat loudly —

“But Miss Schmied, you will permit me respect-

fully to observe, that according to my judgment it would be far wiser to let him sleep an hour than to wake him to put a spoonful of that nasty stuff into his stomach?"

"Ah, Herr Doctor," returned Miss Schmied, "You yourself may be a good physician, but as regards waiting on the sick, there I'm the man for you!"

"You mean to say *woman*," returned the deep voice, and added, flattered by the compliments of poor Schmied, "Truly we practical physicians — truly the keeping of the hours — yes, we will therefore wake him gently."

To do so was not now necessary, for I had already opened my eyes, and should have announced myself except that I believed what appeared before me was a dream. There was my friend Doctor Burbus, standing in the chamber, dressed in a red-plaid dressing-gown, once the property of my departed uncle, as well as the yellow slippers which he wore on his feet, and the white night-cap on his head. He had trimmed his beard, and altogether looked quite respectable. Near him stood Miss Schmied, once more in *neglige*, shaking the medicine-glass in her hand.

Having wiped my eyes several times and assured myself that I did not dream, I was immensely rejoiced to see the doctor again and loudly called him by his name.

Poor old Schmied started so violently at my exclamation that she nearly dropped the glass, but the doctor came towards me smiling, seated himself upon the bed, and before anything else was said or done, explained how it was that he had come to me into this house.

The history was short and simple. The lamp-busi-

ness had filled up the doctor's cup, or if you prefer the expression, had knocked the bottom out of the barrel. If he came into contact with the police in this affair there would be no longer a possibility for him to remain in the town. Therefore when he was summoned before the authorities, he had packed up all that was worth anything amongst his possessions — and this was not by any means much — and taken refuge himself in the hospital, that is with the assistant to the physician of the hospital, one of his fellow-students. Having concealed himself there for a few days he determined to make a pilgrimage further, but whither he knew not. In the first place, however, he wished to keep his word and take leave of me. Thus in the twilight, of the evening before yesterday had he slunk hither. Enquiring for me in the ground floor, the name Burbus had struck the ear of my grandmother, and she had conversed with him.

Now our dear Doctor Burbus, who had, as we know, a great gift for talking, entertained the good old lady by the relations of many sorrowful experiences which had befallen him, partly through his own, and partly not through his own fault; for he was both honourable and prudent enough to confess to her that he had not spent his youth quite in such a manner as it beseemed him to have done. In the narration of his later misfortune he mentioned, as a matter of course, the names of Reissmehl, Barbara, and Phillip, and his assertions agreeing with mine upon so many points, my grandmother clearly perceived that the most cruel injustice had been done me. The doctor's friendship for me also pleased her. In short she invited him to remain a few days in the house until my recovery:

He would then have time enough before him to enter upon a new career.

My joy at having the doctor near me, was not small, and the day through he concocted beautiful plans for the future. My recovery meanwhile went on rapidly, I was soon able to leave my bed and sit at the open window. How much good the fresh breath of spring did me, as it found its way over the roofs of the houses and the narrow streets, telling me in its soft fragrance of the thousand buds opening in the wood, of gay flowers and grass and of the rushing brooks freed from the imprisoning ice! I was filled with a strong yearning after the woods, the city seemed to lie with an anxious weight upon my breast. I mentioned this one day to the physician as he sat before me dressed in his blue frock-coat and white neck-cloth; whereupon he smiled, nodded his head, and said this could easily be arranged.

And this change to the country was indeed arranged in the most beautiful manner. At my grandmother's request the physician wrote a few lines to my guardian, who almost immediately replied in as friendly and kind a manner as we could possibly desire. The letter said amongst other things, "What the doctor wrote to me about the youth, rejoices me, since I see, that he already is recovering. I also think that he has reason when he prescribes that the spring and summer should be devoted to his recovery in the country and I am quite agreeable to this arrangement. I think it would be well to write to his cousin who has the mill in the forest. He would no doubt willingly receive the youth for half a year if a small sum of money were paid him."

This proposal appeared excellent to my grandmother and to my aunt, but poor Schmied sobbed out something about mill-dams, mill-wheels, and other such dangerous things.

The cousin was written to at once, and after a few days came the most satisfactory reply. The well-to-do man would hear nothing about remuneration. The prospect of spending the summer in the country instead of again immediately creeping into a dark shop, made me joyful beyond expression. I had not thought about my good friend Burbus with reference to this plan, when the morning following the evening on which it had been decided in a grand family council, to send me away within a few days, he appeared, no longer in the red-plaid dressing-gown but in his own attire, and declared that he was prepared for his journey and ready to set forth into the world. This sight oppressed my heart, and Miss Schmied being alone with me, and gazing sorrowfully at me, as she now frequently did in prospect of my approaching journey, I opened to her my heart and told her how sad it made me to reflect that now poor Doctor Burbus would leave us, he who possessed no single human being in the whole world to care for him.

It is understood that it was an easy thing at any time to move this tender soul to tears, and she now promised me to consult with my grandmother about this matter and did so immediately. The best result followed. The doctor appeared before me, and related how the good woman had probed into his conscience, and exhorted him now at length to commence a respectable career, and had also further said that if he would accompany me for a few months, she was sure that the

cousin would be quite agreeable, and then in the meantime he could look about him for some opening in life.

Now truly was there joy everywhere. In a short time the needful preparations were completed, and my travelling-things ready; neither did the doctor, who was always a favourite with the women, go empty-handed.

One beautiful morning, when the sun had really begun to shine with warmth, my grandmother let us depart, with a quiet pressure of the hand and a loud out-spoken blessing. My aunt gave us greetings for the cousin, and poor Miss Schmied wept in the most heart-breaking manner.

In the midst of all these ceremonies, it was already two o'clock as we walked up the street towards the city gate. Suddenly the doctor stopped, and as he pointed to a carriage which rolled past us, cried out:

"By Jove, that is our noble Phillip!"

I also looked in the direction of the carriage and saw that personage seated beside the bridally attired Barbara. Upon the back-seat sat Mr. Reissmehl, who carried an enormous nosegay. The sweet bride must have observed us, for she suddenly looked very much alarmed, the apparition of Doctor Burbus upon her path at this time possibly seeming to her an ill-omen. The carriage drove towards the Hospital-church.

For the first moment, the doctor desired to run after them and play off some joke; but I must say that he immediately thought better than to do so.

Soon were the city gates behind, and before us the wide plain, which looked, in her bridal array, more glorious than Miss Barbara, and thus, whilst I for a time look leave of the old life, Doctor Burbus

earnestly determined to begin for himself one altogether new.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Small Adventures on the Road.

THUS did we depart out of the gate, spring around us, and spring within our hearts. The larks flew up from the fields, the sun looked into our faces in a friendly manner, and chased back the mist into the glens and valleys, where, transformed into glittering dew-drops, it still trembled for a time upon the blades of grass, then was voraciously absorbed by the thirsty earth.

Never had I seen Doctor Burbus so gay and light-hearted, and this gaiety was very different from that with which he, in his room, sought to overwhelm the misery of his condition. He wished "good-day" to all the peasant-women whom he met on the road, and gave them advice for the approaching market. Greater however was his amusement when he came upon several seated together by the road side resting with their butter or their fruit. He would then seat himself amongst them, and whilst he was talking to them of their country wares, begin yawning. Presently the peasant women with whom he talked would involuntarily do the same, and anon the whole party sat yawning with wide open mouths. This was an immense enjoyment to him.

Not unfrequently would he run along some distance with the carriages which rolled past us, cap in hand, smilingly remaining behind if a piece of money were flung to him. In short he could not avoid playing a

number of innocent jokes. At times he formed plans for the future and assured me, how he intended to study botany at my cousin's mill, and how he should there perfect his knowledge of hydraulics.

I for my own part recollected with delight, a visit of many weeks' duration which I had once paid in this forest solitude; how I had built myself little huts there or raised sand fortifications from whence I had pelted the passers-by with fire-cones.

Thus we journeyed on till evening, when we reached a small country-town where we spent the night, setting forth again the following morning at sunrise.

Our yesterday's journey had been made over a vast plain, principally along the banks of a small river; we now approached a wooded hilly district whence this river flowed, and amidst the valleys of which the goal of our pilgrimage lay. Ah, how did we rejoice when again we breathed the fresh breath of the pine-trees, to have exchanged the dusty town with its cold houses and streets for these fragrant forest-palaces, beneath the columns of which we now slowly ascended. The doctor was perceptibly graver than yesterday, and when we came out upon the first height of the hills, whence looking back we beheld in the far distance the towers of the town which we had yesterday left, he passed his hand over his eyes, greeted the distant town with a bitter smile, and then shook himself as a dog shakes himself after heavy rain. But sadness of mood was of short duration with this extraordinary man, and although he many times assured me religiously and of a very truth, that he would upon his entrance into the forest-mill entirely put off the old Adam, I did not at the time fully believe him, especially as in the

course of that very day he played an extraordinary prank.

It was as follows. After a short hour's walking we reached the little town of T, which lies equidistant between the town from which we came and the city of C, dividing the districts of their administration. Here the gendarmes of the two towns meet and exchange the vagabonds and criminals which they bring with them, each body of gendarmes taking back the prisoners destined for the prisons of their respective district.

When we came to the inn where these exchanges take place — if I mistake not it was the Golden Boar's Head — we found a considerable company of this description, some of whom had arrived in carriages, some on foot, and where, over a glass of wine or beer, the gendarmes would exchange the papers of the prisoners.

At the upper end of a long table sat the officers — inferior officers of the army, who regarded their admission into the gendarmerie as promotion; powerful figures, all of them, in the prime of life, and with moustaches of an immense growth. I must here observe that there was nothing which Dr. Burbus hated like the police, and that he regarded the gendarmerie as its quintessence.

It did not at first surprise me that when we entered the public room of this Golden Boar's Head, Dr. Burbus remained standing with me by the wall near the vagabonds and criminals, ascribing it merely to the curiosity which I supposed he felt to get a good view of the exchange. There might be in all ten or twelve prisoners, *some of whom were chained; ragged and wretched*

looking men of a wild and suspicious physiognomy, others secured alone by their thumbs, the remainder were entirely free.

From amongst these, one would now and then approach the gendarmes and ask in a low imploring voice if he might be permitted a glass of water or beer, a third might even ask for a glass of brandy. In most cases the request was granted, with a nod or a few words, as for instance, "Hark Schwartzenberger, thou should'st have an abhorrence of all liquor, for without that good friend of thine thou would'st be a free man!" or "Waldauer, thou ought'st to do penance and never drink any more beer. With thee the proverb the madder the brewing the better the beer, does not hold good for thou hast madly brewed all thy life."

These half-gracious observations were received with much laughter by the throng.

The doctor then stepped out of the ranks, advanced towards the gendarmes, and in a low voice asked, "Whether the gentlemen would not graciously permit him the pleasure of drinking a measure of wine?"

"Oh! Wine?" asked the head of the gendarmes without looking up from his papers, "that man must have plenty of money to spare. Well, he can have it as far as I'm concerned."

Upon this, the doctor with much composure, pushed a chair to the table near where this officer of the gendarmes sat, and called aloud in his strong voice:

"A bottle of Mosel-wine!" striking at the same time such a blow with his fist upon the table that the gendarmes' inkstand jumped into the air.

On this the officer who had granted the doctor's request looked up from his writing, and said: "Hark

ye! such excess as that again, fellow, and I'll have you hand-cuffed! Get up from this table and drink your wine there in the corner."

"Aye, what!" returned Burbus in a yet louder tone, "I mayn't sit here as well as a policeman!"

"What!" cried the other, "this fellow's making a row! If he does not hold his tongue this moment, I'll have him handcuffed. — Who is this fellow?" — he asked in a low voice of his colleagues.

The doctor, however, drummed with both his fists upon the table and roared, out, greatly to the delight of the assembled vagabonds:

Wine here! Wine here!
Wine, for a jolly blade's drinking!

It may be imagined that during this extraordinary scene I drew myself back to the wall full of horror, and wished a thousand times that no such mad ideas had entered the doctor's head, for they seemed likely to terminate badly for us, when one of the gendarmes pulled open the window and shouted for a pair of handcuffs to be brought from a cart. This command, however, instead of intimidating the doctor appeared only to goad him onward to inveigh in a loud voice against the misuse of power by the gendarmes and the police.

"Hear him!" exclaimed the gendarme, "I won't rest till he begins his sentence with fourteen days of the dog-hole!"

"And I'll take care," returned the colleague, "that he has not much rest in his ten years, or whatever he gets!"

"Listen to me gentlemen!" said Burbus, "I beg

you will not address me as *he*, the confidential *thou* would be more agreeable."

This entirely snapped the thread of the gendarmes' patience, and who knows what might have happened to the doctor; had not a difficulty occurred when the handcuffs were laid upon the table before the functionaries of justice.

"Let the fellow be handcuffed," said one of the gendarmes to the other.

"Yes, that's what I think also," returned the brother official, "let him be hand-cuffed."

"I?" exclaimed the first, "I can't do it, till I have received him from thee."

"Why how is it?" returned the other in a low voice, after looking over his papers. "He belongs to thy circuit. Give me his papers, and I will soon tame the fellow."

Low as these words were spoken, whilst they examined their papers, nevertheless they reached the ears of the doctor, who smiled to himself with a self-satisfied air.

"How is he called?" demanded one of them, turning to the doctor.

"Doctor Burbus, late candidate of jurisprudence, now professor of hydraulics," returned he.

"Burbus!" repeated both gendarmes and looked at each other.

"What has he done? For what is he in the hands of the police?" demanded they again of the supposed prisoner, and whispered the one to the other:

"'Pon honour thou must have brought the fellow with thee. I have him not in my papers!"

"If I were to relate to you, my honourable gentle-

men," returned Burbus, all I have done in my life it would take a long time. If I am in the hands of the police I don't know what it's for!"

One of the gendarmes said to the other, "It appears to me that it's a joke."

The other said, "It won't do!"

In the meantime the doctor quietly took out his purse, and whilst he paid the landlord for the wine which he had drunk, turned to the gendarmes saying, that so curious an incident had never occurred to him in his whole life before. Here he was, he said, a quiet, peaceful citizen, who had simply asked permission of the high police authority to enjoy a bottle of wine — (his principle always being to obey the public authorities) — regarded as a criminal and treated as such. It appeared to him most extraordinary, and he should therefore lodge a complaint before the court of the district.

The gendarmes looked at each other dumbfounded, and after one of them had examined the doctor's passport, which was in perfect order, they busily occupied themselves with their papers.

I was extremely happy when we again found ourselves on the open high-road.

The doctor, however, laughed for a whole quarter of an hour in the most outrageous manner, and assured me that now for the first time he would really become a new man.

"You see, my dear lad," said he, "there was still a remains of mischief left in me, and it was necessary to let it out so that it should not go on increasing and thus prevent an entire cure."

Before long the wooded hills again inclosed us

within their friendly shadow, and we, now quitting the high-road, struck into a bye-path which, although somewhat narrow and rugged, was far pleasanter and more solitary. The bushes which had bordered the high-road were now exchanged for tall copse-wood interspersed with stately forest trees. The beeches, with their broad roofs of foliage became ever more numerous, these were succeeded by stately oaks and the slender, strong pine, at first singly, then in ever larger groups showing that we were now approaching the summit of the range of hills. The streams also changed their character from point to point. The blood within the water-arteries flowed with ever more violent pulsation the higher we ascended. Even as here, in the upper greenness of the forest, the human heart beats more joyously, so was it with the streams; those which on the plain flow in a quiet almost sluggish course, here rush vigorously from height to height, seeking their way amongst roots and mossy stones, and flinging themselves over a precipice, scatter around on the leaves and grass a fresh shower of spring.

It was at such a point that we sat down to repose ourselves: the doctor supported his head in his hand and became thoughtful.

"To-night then," said he, "we shall reach your cousin at the forest-mill. That is in itself very good and right. You will remain several months there, then a new situation will be found for you. You will be stuck behind the counter, and can prepare for yourself, if not a brilliant career, at least a comfortable future. But I, already an old fellow, must still study at some place or other, for several terms, and be very industrious too, in order to pass my examination. And

for this end, I first of all need money, and secondly money, and thirdly money, and money is the very thing I want firstly, secondly and thirdly. I assure you it's a very bad business. I have already thought of turning soldier, and so devote myself on the medical road, to curing sick animals. But that won't do either; truly nowhere do I see an escape for myself."

"I cannot certainly," returned I, "say much that is consoling," nevertheless do not lose courage. Who knows whether during the time which you will spend at the mill, some prospect may not open out to you, or some piece of good-luck befall you; let it only come, from wherever it may!"

"Yes, yes, such were my thoughts once. In the first rosy light of youth one still believes in miracles. Yet after all you are right, what's the use of racking one's brains. Let us take hold of hope. And above all, tell me what your cousin down there is like, and of what the family circle consists, into which, willy-nilly, we are going to plump ourselves!"

"It is a long time," returned I, "since I was at the mill; I was quite a little boy and the favourite of everybody, even of my cousin the miller."

"Why do you say *even* of your cousin, the miller?"

"Well, he is a somewhat sullen and grave man. In earlier times he was a forest-ranger, but I don't know why he gave up this office. However, I remember well at the time having heard in my family of a great misfortune which had befallen cousin Christopher.

^After this he bought the mill, and when I went to see he might be something above forty. That will be ten years ago. All in the house must be acquainted even I, after I had been two days in the

house received my little occupation, that is to say I must pull up weeds in the garden, tie up young plants, and such like, and I was only regarded by him in a friendly manner when I had been very industrious.

"Ay, ay," said the doctor, "what shall we two do there. For you, and much more I, are passed the age when one can weed gardenbeds and tie up plants."

"Yes, I have already thought about that. Well, a few weeks will soon pass over."

"I will give the old gentleman learned lectures, or as I have already said devote myself to hydraulics," said Burbus.

"My cousin's wife, on the contrary," I continued, "is quite another kind of person, a very sensible and clever woman. She lived in the town in her youth; her father was a clergyman and she is in everything the opposite to her husband. Cousin Christopher is busy day and night at his miller's work, and dines and sups with his servants. If he is weary he lies down upon a bench on the hearth, and listens to the gossip and stories of his servants, scarcely ever speaking a word. When he *does* speak, he always strikes the nail on the head. Although outwardly he is rough and even violent, his children still love and honour him immensely, and he is regarded in the neighbourhood as judge and peace-maker, and settles more quarrels and law-suits than all the surrounding courts of justice put together. The wife, who oversees her domestic arrangements in an admirable manner has also to take part in the meals of the servants, but nevertheless stands upon an entirely different footing with them. She was in the extensive house, her own rooms which her husband only occasionally enters.

And it is very beautiful in these rooms; there are books and lovely flowers, and pretty tables and chairs, and even a piano upon which she plays. There are two sons and two daughters. At first there is said to have been much contention regarding the children's education. Cousin Christopher was of opinion that in his wife's case a town education had for once accidentally turned out well, but ordinarily he maintained that a girl who had assumed city manners and whose nose was always stuck into a book, was of no use in the country. This opinion caused much combat and struggle to the poor wife. The eldest son is named Caspar, and he has not only inherited the nature of a good miller from his father but a passion for field-sports, although at the present time Cousin Christopher never touches a gun. The second son Francis would have resembled his mother, had not his father strongly repressed this perverted inclination, as he termed it. The eldest daughter, Elsbeth, her father's favourite, is an excellent creature. She was especially fond of me; she used to let me ride home upon the plough-horses, and would secretly load her brother's gun for me to shoot sparrows with. The youngest daughter, Sybil, was only a few years older than myself, and is the only one of the family whom I have seen since my visit. In her earliest youth she was delicate, on which account her mother insisted that she should spend a few years in the town, where according to her father, she received a very mistaken sort of education, and therefore is not his special favourite. She is silent and gentle, and as I have heard, neither did her inclination turn to, nor her physical frame appear suited to out-door-labour."

These communications deeply occupied the atten-

tion of my companion, for he uttered every now and then a "hum! hum!" or a "yes, indeed!" whilst he silently sauntered on by my side.

Our road now led us across a broad woodland plain. After a quarter of an hour's walk we reached an open space from whence many different ways diverged. Many old memories rose up within me, especially at sight of an ancient cross, which stood here almost buried in grass and moss. I recollected to have frequently rested here with my Cousin Caspar, especially on Sundays and holidays when we strolled through the woods, he going on before with his gun and I following after carrying his hunting-pouch. The neighbourhood of this cross was avoided at night by the country-people. Many years previously a murder had been committed, the explanation of which neither the people of the district nor yet the officers of justice had ever been able to clear up. Pools of blood had been found here and trampled grass and shrubs — and that was all!

Two roads, which here met, led down into the valley; upon the finger-post of one road might be read: "To Königsbronn-Mill;" that was our goal. Thither therefore we descended. But not until the doctor had seated himself upon the mossy cross, as he said to collect himself and rest a little.

CHAPTER XIX.

Down in a lonesome valley,
A mill-wheel goeth round.

THE woodland plain lay around us here, illumined by the ruddy golden light of the setting sun. The trees standing around the cross flung their long shadows behind them, whilst one side of their stems gleamed brightly and the other side was in deep shadow. The path before us leading to Königsbronn-Mill was soon lost in a hollow way, the end of which appeared to us swallowed up in night. From the valley at our feet, arose the blue mist of evening, and the tops of the pine, and other tall trees, still illumined by the sun, swam like green tufts upon an undulating blue sea.

"Do you not hear water rushing below?" asked I of the doctor.

But he did not answer me, and now we entered into the night-like shadow of the hollow-way. This darkness did not last long, soon lights streamed towards us from the depth of the valley. We recognized the monotonous sound of a mill and also clearly heard the rushing of the water. Soon we perceived buildings with their dark outlines; then the well-known dwelling-house, the mill itself, and the extensive outbuildings. To the left lay the stabling, and it was strange to me to see by the forge, which stood there, a crowd of people and many lights. I imagined that I recognized several of the figures.

We went nearer, and soon clearly beheld a night-piece out of the life at a farm.

There was the tall powerful figure of my cousin

the miller. He held a horse by the bridle, the creature's head hung down, and it seemed to be unsteady upon its legs. Near to the horse lay a large heap of straw, which probably had been brought there to break its fall. Here stood also Cousin Caspar and Elsbeth, who stroked the horse, whilst Francis looked out from a window above, in a white cap.

We approached quite near without being perceived, and heard them talking. These words we caught:

"The horse has overheated himself," said Elsbeth, "and has eaten too much clover."

Cousin Caspar, however, maintained that his illness came from the blood, which is always uneasy and rebellious in spring.

"The best thing to do," cried Francis from the window, "is to lay on him a warm horse-cloth and trot him well about till he gets into a sweat."

"Ah! nonsense!" replied Caspar, "if he's got the colic from over-eating, he may well be uneasy."

The old miller stroked the neck of the horse and enquired, "When did the lad go for the horse-doctor? Will he be there by this time?"

"What do you think, father," said Elsbeth, "if we trotted him well about?"

"When a man is ill," returned the miller, "he must have rest, and beasts perhaps need it likewise, and as I unfortunately know nothing about medicine, I shall follow my idea. Bring him into the stall till the smith comes."

Upon this we stepped suddenly into the circle, and it was a second or two before the family recognized me.

"*Donnerwetter!*" exclaimed Caspar, "It's thee to be sure! Now I am glad!"

Elsbeth extended her hand to me and said, "How the lad's grown!"

The old miller flung the bridle of the horse to a farm-servant, laid one of his hands upon my head, and observed: "Well, it has also gone badly with thee in the town! If thou had'st stayed here with us, thou would'st not have looked so out of sorts."

Francis shouted in a friendly way to me out of the window, and disappeared, calling to his mother and Sybil.

Amidst all these greetings of my relatives, the doctor had not been thought of. He meanwhile seized the horse's head and pulled him somewhat aside. It was now time to introduce him.

"Is this the doctor, about whom our great-aunt has written?" cried Caspar. Elsbeth adding, "Thou know'st, father, a son of Miller Burbus!"

The old man's countenance, however, did not look as friendly when he heard the name of the doctor as it had done at sight of me.

But Burbus did not allow this to disconcert him.

"Good evening!" he said shortly, and then taking hold of the halter turned the horse sharply round to the left by which movement we all saw that he drew up his fore and hind leg with a painful action. The doctor made him repeat this movement several times and then, turning to the miller said quietly,

"By your leave, Miller, the horse has neither over-eaten himself, nor is it an affection of the blood. The fact is, he has turned round short in the stable and has sprained himself in the shoulder."

"Certainly!" cried Elsbeth, "I have no doubt of it. If I've told that good-for-nothing Anton once, not to

turn the cattle so sharp round in their stalls, I've told him a thousand times!"

"Yes, yes," said Caspar, that may be the cause!

Upon this the miller made the same movement with the horse; observed the painfully-expressive attitude of the creature when he touched the shoulder and said, "Well it may be so!"

"It is so in reality," returned the doctor firmly and explicitly. "Let the horse be taken back to the stable at once. Of course you have some walnut-oil in the house, which he will want, and I will then write out a recipe for an ointment."

"And the gentleman understands all this!" said the miller, lifting his cap with a sudden sentiment of respect.

"Certainly," returned the doctor. "I have especially directed my attention to the treatment of sick cattle."

I was greatly rejoiced at this occurrence, for although I calculated very much on the effect which my grandmother's letter would produce, I was nevertheless afraid that the presence of an only half-educated student would be unpleasant to cousin Christopher, who would naturally regard him as a lazy unpractical fellow.

Just then the miller's wife and Sybil came out. They both welcomed me with a hearty kiss and I was forthwith carried triumphantly into the mill. Doctor Burbus in the meantime went into the stable to see that the sick horse was bedded in the best manner possible.

Cousin Christopher made, this evening, an exception to his usual habits, by entering the beautiful rooms of his wife, whither I had been conducted. This

was done in honour of me; and I was then questioned regarding the health of my grandmother and of all my uncles and aunts, together with that of poor, old Miss Schmied, who had once spent a few weeks at the mill.

I found my cousin's family very much in the same condition as I had left it several years before. It is true that the miller had grown older and greyer, and the first-born of the family, Caspar, who had married in the interim, and now lived with his wife and child at the farm, could not, as he jocularly observed, now thoroughly free his formerly bright, black hair from the white powder of the mill. Some deep wrinkles had also begun to shew themselves on the refined and sensible countenance of the miller's wife, and Elsbeth had perceptibly grown older and stouter. Had she been attired as a man she would have made a first-rate Circassian. She maintained a remarkable distaste for the matrimonial state, and a little black moustache which had formerly been an object of merriment amongst us, had grown stronger and more conspicuous.

Sybil had matured into a very pretty girl. She was of a much more delicate organisation than Elsbeth, and now pleased my taste much better than her elder sister, who had formerly been the great object of my admiration because her personal strength had always come to my rescue from the practical jokes of her brothers. Sybil now also appeared much more polite and refined than her sister, for whilst I sat at the table, resting my head on my hands, Sybil was seated near her mother, busily knitting away all the time, with her sweet blue eye fixed upon me, asking me first one question and then another.

Before long the doctor entered and assured us that the horse was somewhat better. The miller made room for him in the circle, and as he, moreover, addressed now and then a few words to him he was thus invited, as it were, and made welcome to take part in the conversation. This was satisfactory to me, as I thereby saw that he had no decided antipathy to him.

After supper, which was this evening partaken in the family-circle, and not with the servants, the blacksmith-veterinary surgeon arrived and entirely approving of Doctor Burbus's treatment of the suffering horse, my friend instantaneously rose in the good opinion of all the inhabitants of Königsbronn-mill.

CHAPTER XX.

Book-keeper and Correspondent.

THE doctor and I did not occupy the same sleeping-apartment. His room adjoined that of the unmarried son Francis, and a most charming little chamber was given to me, which opened from the rooms of the miller's wife. It was a most retired and comfortable chamber. The mill did not stand in the very bottom of the valley, so that the ground shelved down below my window some hundred feet or more. To the left were the mill-wheels, so close to the house, that if I stretched my hand from the window it was wetted by the falling water. The body of the mill-stream flowed calmly after it had left the wheels along an artificial water-course, just below my window, and fell to the right of the house, through a rocky gorge into the depth of the valley.

When all had sunk to rest I still leant out of my window and rejoiced myself with the deep silence of night which reigned around. The mill was closed and the water flowed along calmly. The trailing plants which grew on the walls of the house and which through the day were dashed ruthlessly up and down by the rushing water, now floated on the placid stream and seemed trembling with joy in the consciousness that the water could not carry them away with it down the rocky gorge.

On the morrow every thing in the mill resumed its accustomed course, nobody troubling themselves any more about us than if we had been there for years. The doctor pursued his cure of the sick horse; returned short answers to the old millers' short questions; conversed with Elsbeth about newly introduced dressing for land; and related amusing anecdotes out of his student-life experience to the two sons, as they all three sate smoking their pipes together after dinner.

Burbus did not appear to trouble himself much either about the miller's wife or Sybil, and me he left at full liberty to occupy myself as I liked, and I, well knowing the peculiar views of Cousin Christopher, endeavoured at once to find some useful employment. But I was no longer a child, as in the years gone by, weeding the garden-beds seemed therefore very stupid work to me, and when I went out with Sybil to help her in tying up the flowers, we either idled away the time in talking or fell to romping together, and thus did more harm than good.

In an ordinary way cousin Christopher would have left things to take their own course and have said nothing, although so doing it might have been at the cost of

his good opinion. But in my case it was different. I was his blood relation, towards whom he felt well disposed, and consequently considered it as his duty to accustom to steady and useful industry.

Thus I found one morning that he had provided a little occupation for me, an occupation which would keep me sufficiently employed, and compel me to be seated for many hours at a table, when in fact, I would much rather have been rambling about the woods and fields. He took me into his counting-house and installed me as his book-keeper and correspondent.

"There is not very much to do," he said. "The main thing is to be correct and punctual; and you will then learn something."

I was in the first instance no little anxious on the doctor's account regarding this question of industry, knowing him, as I did, to be naturally lazy and unadapted for work. But I might have spared myself any anxiety on this subject. The doctor was clever and wary enough to prove my forebodings false.

When the cure of the horse was completed, he found for himself fresh occupation, keeping always close to the old miller. Amongst other things, he would go with him, ever so early in the morning, through the woods, and soon had so entirely won his confidence that he was requested to superintend the men then at work felling timber. Occasionally he would even drive the heavily-laden timber-dray with its team of four horses from the forest to the farm-yard. On such occasions he cracked his whip so tremendously that everybody would run out of the house laughing to witness his arrival; even cousin Christopher would come quietly smiling out of the mill.

Friend Burbus on such occasions presented a highly amusing appearance. His countenance was half covered by his large beard, and a small student's cap was jauntily stuck on the crown of his head.

I could not help frequently confessing to him how much I was rejoiced by his entire change of character, yet at the same time how inexplicable it seemed to me, on which he would reply;

"My dear lad, things must be changed. I must relearn the habitude of work, for this habitude is in itself an art, and you may believe me, that if for a time I can only accustom myself to be occupied in hard work, from early morning till night, then later on it will be all the easier for me to set to doggedly to work on something else, and to carry it on successfully to the end."

If at such time I reminded him of the Reissmehls; of his lodgings; of the pictures on his walls, and of his skeleton, he would make a grimace, as though shaking himself morally free from them, and reply,

"Dear ex-apprentice, that was a grey, rainy sort of existence! We have nothing to do with it now."

My employment was now that of writing such letters to neighbouring landed-proprietors and forest-officials as the miller required and in making out accounts for grain and flour. My counting-house was in the upper storey of the mill, where there was a constant tremour in the floor as though it were agitated by an earthquake. Now and then the old miller came up to look after me or to give me something more to do. Occasionally Caspar made his appearance, his face dusty with flour, and whilst he stayed he would draw a few puffs from his pipe. But the most frequent and

by far the most agreeable of my visitors was Sybil, who brought her sewing and was in no hurry to depart. Although there were hours together in which we did not exchange a word, yet there were again times in which we conversed in the liveliest manner about the past, or when I related to her all I knew about her acquaintance in the town. Now and then also, the doctor would make his appearance, sometimes with a whip or an axe in his hand, but he never remained long when Sybil was with me.

However familiar he had become with Elsbeth and the two sons, laughing and playing off his jokes with them, he always appeared much less at his ease with the miller's wife or Sybil. The latter having perceived this fact, told me that having mentioned it to her mother, she had replied that she, Sybil, must on that very account behave in the most polite and kind manner to him; for that he was the prodigal son, who, though already on the way to amendment, did not, as yet, feel himself at his ease with quiet, friendly people.

"It is really a pity," said Sybil on one occasion, "that he does not converse more freely with my mother, because she says that one day lately when she was asking him about some books, he spoke so sensibly that she was quite pleased with his conversation. — But he has a horribly hateful beard! You must never let such a one grow on your face!"

I passed my hand over my smooth chin and promised her never to grow a beard like the doctor's.

CHAPTER XXI.

Pleasures at the Mill.

AT such a mill as that of Königsbronn, lying in the depth of the forest, and near to which no high-road runs, the life is, for the most part, extremely monotonous, the only interruptions being, Sunday visits to or from neighbours, the village wake with its dance, and hunting-parties, public or private. Caspar used to take a great interest in the latter, and on the occasion of my first visit, I had frequently the honour of accompanying him. The preserve belonging to the mill, and farmed by the miller, was not large, and did not by any means satisfy the hunting tastes of Caspar. He possessed a gun for secret hunting expeditions which could be taken to pieces; the stock carried in the pocket, whilst the barrel formed a walking-stick, which he took carelessly in his hand, and thus, innocent in appearance, we were accustomed to set forth, on beautiful autumnal days, as soon as it was light in the morning. There was in the neighbourhood a glorious preserve, a deep and extensive valley, the upper slopes of which were cultivated land. Here the hares luxuriated through the earlier part of the night, and having eaten their fill, took up here also their sleeping quarters; for along the sides of this gorge or valley grew a great number of fine beech-trees, the feet of which were embedded in deep moss. Here it was that the game made their lair, being protected from wind and weather by the trees and the inequalities of the ground.

The proverb says that "stolen fruit is the sweetest,"

and thus we found our greatest pleasure to be ascending in the earliest dawn, out of the misty valley into the higher range of the mangel-wurzel fields and so, circling the edge of the valley, to be on the look-out for hares which did not properly belong to us. Thus creeping round, if we came upon a hare, lying in the enjoyment of its sweet morning dreams, it was my duty to give a concerted signal, on which Caspar, having screwed his gun together, crept forward and shot the unlucky hare on her form. This done, I would then dart forward, as carrier of the game, seize it; and this repeated several times we would return to the mill, with the rising sun, mostly with a considerable spoil.

We were never exactly caught by the keepers, but several times ran the risk of being so. On one occasion, at the very moment when I was dragging a hare out of its mossy bed, Caspar, after listening attentively in the direction of the wood, sprang towards me, and seizing me by the collar dragged me along with him, "through bush and briar," and even through a part of the mill-stream, right into the house. Very soon after, a couple of keepers, in perfect ignorance of our misdeemeanours, came into the mill to light their pipes, and Caspar, who had pulled off his poacher-clothes, came forward with a light for them, with the air of a man who had just risen from his bed.

Still more interesting than this hare-shooting, was our badger-hunting with dogs. This took place in the evening. Five or six of us used to set off as night came on, some armed with large iron-forks, others with heavy cudgels, and attended by the hounds and farm-dogs. As soon as the dogs scented the badger they were set upon him, and we followed as fast as our legs

would carry us, through the woods and over bushes and cultivated land, a terrible chase. But it mattered not to us whether we rushed through brooks or tore our way through briars, we were too eager to trouble ourselves about such trifles, and consequently often reached home in a very disconsolate plight. If the dogs seized the badger they held him down till we came up, when he was unceremoniously slain.

A far more harmless, though to me much less interesting, pleasure were the village wakes. All the other inhabitants of the mill, however, rejoiced over these rural entertainments. Even Sybil and her sister Elsbeth made a point of going to those which were held in the more important villages, and where the company was more select.

As dancing makes a part of these wake festivities, it may readily be imagined that the doctor would be inferior to no one in the dancing-hall. He swept about grandly, as he had been accustomed to do in his student-days, and was in every way the principal personage there. On such occasions, too, he allowed no one but himself to drive, and as he had from the first shewn his expertness with the whip this prerogative was cheerfully conceded to him.

Those wakes which begin on the Sunday are by far the most important: the masters, mistresses and servants, generally attend church in the forenoon, and as soon as service is over the merrymaking begins.

I will describe one such occasion. One of the largest wagons is drawn forth from the shed, and after being adorned with green branches, which serve the double purpose of ornament and shade, planks are placed

across it for seats, on which are laid sacks stuffed with straw as cushions.

Such of the men and maids as have conducted themselves well are invited to the ball, by "the uncle" — as the master of the house is called — and at about eleven o'clock the equipage sets forth, as fast as the horses can gallop.

The villages usually lie at the distance of an hour or two from each other, and every principal peasant possesses a friend in every village, upon whose hospitality, according to Homeric ideas, he can count for the reception of men and maids, horses and equipage. There the midday meal is cooked, and an immensity is devoured and drunk. The ball takes place in the evening, and at night the whole company returns, with the exception perhaps of some black sheep, in the shape of lad or lass, who has not turned up at the appointed hour of departure.

It was a dazzlingly bright Sunday morning in spring, when we this year set out on the first of these merry-makings. Cousin Christopher and the doctor were the only individuals of the household who were unfrequent attenders at church, and on this occasion the latter had been busy from six o'clock in the morning seeing that the horses and the harness were in the best possible condition. By eleven all was ready. The doctor had harnessed four of the best horses to the wagon, and now seated on the front seat with the cross-reins in his hand, looked perfectly majestic. His former practice in sledging-parties had given him a wonderful expertness in the use of the longest sledging-whip, and in order, on this particular occasion to exhibit this accom-

plishment he had prepared a whip with an immensely long lash.

Near the wagon, freshly attired in their Sunday's best, stood the farmer's man and the eldest maid, the miller's lad and the young dairy-woman, in respectful expectation.

Then appeared "the uncle," with Cousin Francis, and Caspar and his wife, who all took their places in the wagon. Next came Elsbeth, followed by her mother and Sybil. The doctor's countenance, which beamed with delight, became perceptibly graver when the two last prepared to step into the wagon. I did not comprehend what was the reason why the doctor when Sybil and I clambered to the first seat, offered to relinquish the reins to Caspar; he however laughingly declined them.

All being now ready "the uncle" gave the word "forward." The doctor made a terrific flourish with his whip in the air, and the four horses sprang off at a gallop, with their bells ringing and the brightly polished brass-mountings of their harness sparkling and glittering in the morning sun.

Immediately after leaving the mill our road lay through dewy meadows which were covered with gossamer-webs, like a shining veil. The wheels cut into the turf and left their traces, like two long glittering serpents which seemed continuously to follow the wagon. Butterflies flew around us, and high in the air a invisible larks gave us a morning concert.

By one o'clock we were at the village where the kes were held. Our destination was a large farm, here we found already preparations for a plentiful dinner. Cousin Christopher's friend stood in the door-

way to welcome us. He wore breeches, white stockings, and shoes with buckles, a long waistcoat of brown Manchester cotton, with his white shirt-sleeves shewing, and a white cap on his head. His wife stood somewhat behind him and as sign of welcome had tucked up one corner of her long, white linen apron. They both greeted their guests in the most friendly manner.

An enormous fire roared on the hearth, above which hung a large black iron kettle, in which an immense and fragrant ham was simmering. Peas and beans were cooking in another vessel, whilst in close proximity to a gigantic pot filled with soup, the indispensable potatoes, mealy and white as snow, were steaming.

The miller's wife was conducted by the hostess into her state-chamber; cousin Christopher and Elsbeth went with their entertainer through the stables. Sybil walked with Anna Maria, the youngest daughter of the house, round the garden; the eldest maid and the young dairy-woman helped their colleagues around the boiling pots, whilst the farmer's man and the miller's boy took their seats near the fire, which they plied with fuel, and made acquaintance in preparation for the dancing pleasures of the approaching evening. I helped the doctor to unharness the horses, and then we were summoned to dinner.

The table was set out in the garden, and consisted of a long plank supported by four posts driven into the ground, and covered with a dazzlingly white table cloth. The host pronounced a blessing, and all sat down to the table, forming a many-coloured company. All were seated together, we the guests, and the whole

household of our entertainers, men and maids of both households included.

Whenever I recall a meal of this description I experience a sentiment of inward satisfaction. The fresh air has wonderfully sharpened the appetite, and together with the simple, nourishing food, partaken of beneath God's beautiful, free heaven; and amidst the song of birds is enjoyed simple yet vigorous conversation. There is on these occasions no great etiquette to speak of. The men sit in their shirt-sleeves and all is free and easy.

From the end of the meal until coffee-time every one was left at liberty to follow their own bent.

The elder folks conversed about the cultivation of the land the breeding of cattle, and other country matters. The young folks amused themselves with much merriment in the garden.

The doctor and I took our caps and strolled out of the farm-yard, across the little bridge, over a foaming mountain-stream towards the wood. We walked slowly but without a word, up the rushing stream and delighted ourselves with watching the little cascades which the water made amongst the smooth pebbles.

It was very warm, and when after reaching some low rocks, the feet of which were covered with soft moss, the doctor proposed that we should take there our afternoon nap, I cheerfully assented. We stretched ourselves upon the natural green couch and soon were fast asleep.

In about half an hour's time, however, I was awakened by the sun, which, penetrating through the bushes shone into my eyes. The doctor, who lay in the shade, still slept. Before long I heard amidst a tangle

of bushes at about a hundred yards distant, the sound of laughter and low singing. It was the voice of Sybil, and she began the well-known song:

Down in a lonesome valley
The mill-wheel turneth round

singing it to the attentive Anna Maria, at first in a low, humming voice, as if timidly. Gradually, however, the singing became louder, and at the last verse rang clearly through the wood. One could hear that the voice came from a heart for which as yet no ring was broken.

The doctor lay near me fast asleep and seemed to be having an agreeable dream. Now and then he moved his lips and smiled, then slightly parting them appeared to be drawing a deep breath.

The girls, when the song was ended, laughed and joked together.

"Do you know Sybil," said Anna Maria, "people say that the doctor — what's his name? — knew you in the town and that he is now come here out of love to you!"

"What nonsense!" laughed the other, "why should he come here after me?"

"Well," returned Anna Maria, "he will do what one reads of so beautifully in books, first become acquainted with you, and then marry you."

I looked uneasily at the doctor lying near me, and was thankful that he still slept and heard nothing of the conversation. Although the greater portion of his face was in the shade, still there was no keeping back the sun which already began to shine on the tip of his nose.

Anna Maria continued:

"He has such a funny name. What really is his name?"

"What is his name?" returned Sybil; "He is called Doctor Burbus."

"Burbus! Burbus!" shouted the other as loud as she was able; "It sounds almost like the cuckoo who is shouting about us!"

And then she began shouting with a clear voice into the wood "Burbus! Cuckoo! Burbus! Cuckoo! — Burbus! Burbus!"

On which both she and Sybil burst forth into the most delicious peals of ringing laughter.

The doctor had however awoke, startled at thus hearing his name called forth. I had only just time to tell him what the cause was and thus prevent his answering the call in his great, strong voice.

But now the girls spoke again.

"Don't be so foolish!" besought Sybil, "you know one must not joke with the cuckoo!"

"Why not?" laughingly demanded the other, "Come, we'll see directly how long it will be before your husband comes!"

And she shouted the old rhyme into the wood;

Cuckoo, Cuckoo, tell to me
When shall Sybil her true-love see?

For a moment or two all was still. The girls were apparently listening for the reply of the bird out of the forest thicket. But no cuckoo happening to be near at hand, and all around remaining in a hushed silence, the doctor put his hands to his mouth and shouted

forth the cry of "cuckoo!" more naturally than I ever before heard it from human lips.

"One! two! three! four!" cried Anna Maria; "after three years your wooer will come. But one thing I beg," added she, "if I am to be your bridesmaid, your bridegroom must cut off his horrid beard. Ah, I can't endure it! Command him to cut it off!"

"Oh! Anna Maria," returned Sybil, "don't talk such silly nonsense. What are Doctor Burbus and his beard to me! Besides," added she in a lower tone, "he lets it grow to please my sister Elsbeth!" an observation which was answered by long and incredulous merriment.

The doctor had listened with great attention to this discourse. He evidently had become graver, and at the observation that he let his beard grow out of love to Elsbeth, a sceptical smile passed over his face. I wished to surprise the girls, and have a good laugh at them, but the doctor would not allow this, and begged me to go back with him to the village.

In the evening was the great dance. The dancing-hall was the large public-room at the little public-house. Here, however, there was such a crowd that during waltzing the whole company could not stir from their places, but each pair moved like a top round and round on the same spot.

A gallery for the musicians not having been contemplated when the room was built, they had however still to be provided for, and this was done in a very original manner. Strong hooks had been driven into the great supports of the walls, upon which chairs, instead of pictures, were hung, and on these the orchestra was seated. Their legs, it is true, hung down in the

air, and the director of the band, who beat time with his feet, did not unfrequently come into vexatious contact with the heads of the tallest dancers.

It was remarkable how little part the doctor took this evening in the ball. He had to dance, it is true, with Elsbeth, who had earlier in the evening invited him to be her partner; and I watched him fetch her for that purpose, and, as it seemed to me, with some disinclination. He carried her off from a conversation, with the son of a neighbouring peasant-farmer on sheep and the cattle-plague, a conversation carried on, it seemed to me, in a voice louder than needful. I also observed that this peasant-farmer's son appeared anything but displeased when he was thus relieved from the discourse of this strong-minded woman.

I could not understand why Burbus did not dance with Sybil. I noticed that he occasionally glanced towards, her but then he passed his hand over his eyes as if he had detected himself in an action which was not permissible.

I could not forbear saying to him, that it was only right to dance also with Cousin Christopher's youngest daughter, upon which, after long consideration, he determined to do so.

He then slipped forth with Sybil to waltz, and I noticed that she cast down her eyes when he asked her. The two danced so beautifully, that almost all the other pairs left off dancing, and the whole space of the hall was at their disposal. At first Sybil had kept her eyes fixed upon the ground, but gradually, as she agreeably felt the assured step of her partner, and became equally assured in her own movements, she raised her head higher and higher, and at last floated proudly

along like any princess. An universal clapping of hands at length gave the signal of the termination of the dance, and Sybil, standing with loudly beating heart near the doctor, perceived for the first time that they had had the dance, all to themselves. Blushing she cast down her eyes. I stood just behind her, and wished to say some pretty thing to the lovely dancer; but knew not what — when suddenly a silly thought came into my head: I approached her ears and whispered gently — Cuckoo!

Sybil started with terror — approached me a moment, then left her partner, hastened to Anna Maria, and the two suddenly left the dancing-room.

On the return home no one was missing. No delay of any kind occurred at the appointed hour of setting off again, therefore no displeasure on the part of Cousin Christopher, for on those occasions when the miller thought it right thoroughly to become acquainted with his friend's cellar, it was not wise to trifle with him. At the exact hour, therefore, we were all seated in the wagon, the doctor seized the reins, and Sybil and myself were seated on the front bench beside him.

It was a wonderfully beautiful evening. After we had travelled some distance without a word being said, Sybil challenged me to sing with her; and therefore we sang all kinds of gay and sorrowful melodies amid the still night-air. I had, as was generally my custom, placed my arm round her waist, and she leaned in a loving sisterly way against me, now whispering something into my ear, now shutting her eyes as though she slept. She spoke not a word to the doctor.

I could not but notice, an extraordinary expression this evening on the doctor's countenance. He looked

very ferociously at his horses, pulled up the reins tightly, and cracked his whip much more than was needful. Now and then he leaned far backwards, as if he were going to pull up the horses by main force, but I noticed that in so doing he merely glanced backwards at us, namely at my hand, which I had placed in the hand of Elsbeth. He shewed us all manner of feats of artistic driving, and when we came to a difficult piece of road, where steeply descending a hill it bent like a bow over a little bridge and rose again to the opposite hill, he drove at full gallop, making all the women in the wagon cry out "Jesus!" "Maria!" and "Joseph!"

Sybil and I had been telling each other fairy tales, and when the doctor laughed at the exclamations of terror, the young girl whispered to me:

"Bluebeard must have laughed just in that way!"

Meantime the stars had begun to twinkle and the moon to shine, and when we reached the broad meadows near the mill the rushing sound of the water which had followed us out of the hills gradually ceased, and in its stead came right and left out of the bushes the chirping of the field-cricket, and the nightingale lamented with a wonderfully touching enchantment.

Soon we reached the mill, and every one, wearied with the heat and the day's pleasure, with the great dinner and the evening's dance, sought their couch with gladness. But I heard the doctor singing still an hour later the old well-known song in which is said:

"If thou look here, then I look there."

CHAPTER XXII.

Doctor Burbus! Leave-taking.

THE following day everything fell again into its accustomed course at the mill. The wheels made a clatter as usual, Cousin Francis ran hither and thither with his mealy face and jacket; Elsbeth went into the cow-houses to see that all was right with the animals; Sybil and her mother sat at work in their pleasant room, and I was industriously busy over the miller's account-books in my little counting-house with its quivering floor. Things however were not quite the same with the doctor.

Instead of going merrily out into the forest, as he usually did and when he came back sitting down with us laughing and joking, he would now set off at early dawn into the woods and not return till supper, after which he would frequently go off to bed without addressing a single word to me.

I also observed that for several days he brought home each evening a bunch of wild flowers, or a quantity of strawberries, which however he never gave to anyone, but took with him into his chamber and then flung from his window into the mill-stream.

One evening Cousin Christopher had ridden out. It was a Sunday and he was not expected home before supper-time. The whole day the doctor had been wandering about in the woods, without, as he formerly used to do, taking me with him, a proceeding which caused me great pain. In the evening he returned with his wild-flowers in his hand, and as the servants had

already eaten their supper, he was shewn into the room of the miller's wife, where the evening meal waited for us and the miller.

We all stood near the open window, and when Burbus approached us, evidently low-spirited as he had been for some time, the kind-hearted hostess, perceiving his dejected air, seized the opportunity of noticing his flowers, in order to draw him into conversation with us.

He raised them hastily, looked at them, and handed them to Sybil who received them.

"How is it?" said Sybil's mother, "that one hardly ever sees you now, Doctor Burbus? You stroll about the woods all day, and never come home till evening."

"Have you then observed this, Madam?" returned the doctor with gravity. "I must confess, that it does me good to hear this, for indeed I usually am so homeless a being, so entirely alone in the world, that no human creature takes notice of my existence or non-existence."

"But that," added the amiable lady, "you cannot surely mean to say of any of us!"

"No, no," hastily returned the doctor with a melancholy smile, "here every one is very friendly and good to me; I ought to be truly thankful for it."

Sybil walked with me to another window, and the doctor stepped nearer to the miller's wife, who said to him in her pleasant, consoling voice:

"Listen to me, Doctor Burbus, you have in truth a morbid disposition. At first I thought absence from the world, and the quiet of our mill, in the midst of these beautiful woods, must do you good. You also seemed in the beginning to be cheerful and happy. But now,

I do not know what has occurred, for all at once, you have begun to look like a man who is troubled by his past life."

"No, no, certainly not that," returned the doctor, and leaned out of the window.

"Now, I can thoroughly believe," returned the kind mother, "that there is nothing lying upon your conscience to give cause for severe reproaches, and you are still young enough to be able to repair the errors of your past life, which were simply those of thoughtlessness and a lively temperament."

"Truly so, my dear lady," returned the doctor, "only one must have the opportunity of amending the past. I have already been weeks, months here; I roam about the woods, I look after the men, I drive the horses, but all that I do the commonest servant might do for you."

"Yes, but who says that it is needful for you to do any thing for us! You are our guest."

"Yes, and then?"

"Well, then remain so, as long as is agreeable to you."

"Yes, and then?" returned the doctor after a pause, "then some fine morning, I shall shake you all by the hand, and say 'farewell Cousin Christopher, farewell dear lady — farewell Sybil —'"

We had up to this moment involuntarily listened to the discourse of the doctor. Sybil spake no word, but leaned out of the window holding the flowers over the sluggishly flowing mill-stream. At the words of the doctor — "farewell Sybil," she gently sighed, and the flowers slipping out of her hands, fell into the water, which slowly carried them along in its course. A loud

exclamation of "Ah!" which followed the flowers from Sybil's lips, suddenly interrupted the conversation of the doctor and the miller's wife, and caused them to look down towards the stream.

"There they go!" cried the doctor with a loud laugh which sounded anything but merry, "they will soon get into the weir and be torn and destroyed."

"Could they not be saved?" cried Sybil with a peculiar tone in her voice!

"Do you wish to save them, Miss Sybil!" cried the doctor joyfully. "A strong hand and a good will, can do much! We will try therefore to save the flowers, and with good luck, place them once more in your hand!"

Before I could hold him back he had swung himself out of the window, glided down by a wire-trellis, and hastened with a firm step and without sign of dizziness, along the narrow edge of the mill-stream. He in fact reached the flowers before they came over the weir, drew them forth triumphantly and hastened back to reach them up to Sybil, who stretched forth her hands for them.

The lovely young girl had become white as a lily, and when she had grasped her flowers, she ran to her mother, concealed her face in her hands, and I believe even wept.

The doctor did not appear again that evening, and the miller's wife the next morning had a long conversation with the miller, who came to table in a thoroughly bad humour.

Towards myself the doctor had not grown more friendly, and the more he withdrew himself from me, the more did I seek the society of Sybil, feeling in my

hours of leisure that I must have some one's society. Each time that the doctor met me in the garden hand in hand with the young girl, or if we stood in the narrow windows of the mill, where the space being so small it was impossible for me not to put my arm round her waist, he always looked at me with a gloomy countenance. I had no idea at the time, what I possibly could have done to offend him. Now, I can most fully understand all his feelings.

Thus it was one hot summer's day: a thunder-storm had cooled the air; towards evening the grey clouds became somewhat clearer, they separated here and there, and the blue sky looked through their openings; the clouds themselves too became tinted at the edges, and ever more transparent, first clear grey, then violet, then even golden, and at last the friendly beams of the sun burst forth, causing the pulses of nature to beat more rapidly, and all the life of nature to rouse itself joyously before it lay down to sleep for the night. The trees and flowers sent forth their sweetest odours, the beetles hummed, and the night-ingales poured forth from the bushes their melody, as if seated upon thrones of diamonds, for rain-drops hung from every leaf.

It had also grown warm; warm, with that agreeable refreshing warmth which causes a youthful heart to expand, and fills it with enthusiastic dreams of the future, and when, out of the trembling rays of the evening sun, which are beheld through half-closed eyes, a thousand beautiful glittering pictures arise — dream-pictures of future good-fortune, and future glory.

The sun descended, and the glittering evening sky was filled with warm, soft air. Sybil and I leant in

the window of the large sitting-room and looked down upon the mill-wheels below us. It was now evening, at which time the doctor was not usually admitted into the private sitting-room, but where I, as a member of the family, and a mere youngster, still possessed the right to be with my cousins, who frequently at such an hour were to be seen in rural *negligées* — I wore a thin summer-coat, and whilst the mother was reading, Sybil and I chatted about past times and the childish pranks which we had played together. We talked of the time when I slept in the great spare-bed near the mother's room, and how on Sunday mornings before she was washed and dressed, little Sybil would run into my room and perching upon the bed, we would plan our Sunday's amusements. How we once carried off a great piece of linen and made a tent in the garden, where even when the great yard-dog came to visit us he was received with much honour.

Thus, leaning out of the window we lived the old times over again.

When it was ten o'clock the miller's wife went off to bed. We, however, were permitted to remain up a little longer. Moths flew about, glow-worms were sprinkled upon the grass, and I, leaning against the girl's warm shoulder, felt a shiver pass through me, perhaps from the night-air, or the mist which was rising white from the mill-dam and the mountain streams. Sybil, feeling me shiver, loosened the large warm shawl in which she was wrapped and passed it also over me. It was almost as if we had been sitting once more under the tent of our childhood. I could feel the beating of Sybil's heart as we were thus drawn close together.

Suddenly we heard, through the silence of night, a knocking as of wood upon wood, and then perceived that it was the doctor doing something near the mill-wheels. He looked up towards us every now and then, and I wished him a good evening. At first I thought he did not hear me. But that was not the case, for as soon as Sybil said, in her low tone,

"Good evening, Doctor Burbus!"

He leapt upon the bank of the mill-stream and came under the window.

"What are you doing there?" asked Sybil.

"I could not sleep," returned the doctor, "and, therefore went out to walk by the weir, and there I observed a post which has got loose and which probably the water would have carried away to-morrow."

I knew not why, but the doctor looked as angry and at the same time as depressed, as he had done upon the rainy November morning when I woke in his chamber near the Reissmehls' house, and when he prepared that never-to-be-forgotten coffee.

"It is a beautiful night, dear doctor," I said to him, and he replied;

"Yes, certainly — perhaps so — just as you may take it! Ill-humour seizes me and I become unhappy, yes sad, when I am alone on a beautiful evening. You very likely are never melancholy," added he, with a strange laugh.

"Thank God, no!" returned Sybil for me; "in one's childish years there is no reason to be sad."

"No; childish years!" laughed the doctor, "No, he is a fine child — that youngster!"

"He is still my child," returned Sybil and kissed my forehead. "Yes, thou art my child, is it not so?"

And look, doctor," she added in her innocent *naïveté*, showing the shawl, "I have wrapt him up, so that he may not take cold."

"He is a lucky child," remarked the doctor; "if I, for example, were to take cold, no one would trouble themselves about me."

"Yes, there is the old story," returned Sybil, "and my mother was quite right when she told you that it was not good of you to think no one interested themselves about you. One does concern oneself about you, — one concerns oneself very much."

"Is that the case?" asked the doctor joyfully, "Is that really the case? Will you give me your hand upon it?"

"How can I give you my hand out of the window upon it?" laughed the young girl.

But he repeatedly and vehemently prayed, "Oh, give me your hand upon it!"

"Give him your hand, Sybil," I said.

Hereupon she unwrapt her arm from the warm shawl and stretched it forth to the doctor. Later I recalled this moment well, when the doctor seized her hand and kissed it warmly. As far as I can recollect the hand was a pretty little hand, and besides the hand there was the arm to be seen, round and soft. — The doctor gave himself much trouble after he had kissed the hand, to touch with his lips a dimple in the arm, which he only accomplished after a good deal of exertion. Then he rejoiced greatly in a low voice, which, however, spoke from a joyous and contented mood. Even I received friendly words from him.

"Dear ex-apprentice," said he laughing, "come down, we will take a walk in the woods. The world is very beautiful after all!"

He threw up a kiss towards 'me with his hand and sprang over the weir. Sybil looked after him, and when she said to me,

"Good night, my dear, sleep well!" there was an extraordinarily heavenly and friendly smile upon her lips.

Upon this she went to her chamber.

It was quite agreeable to me that she went then; for although I was very happy to be with my cousin, I must confess that I preferred a nocturnal ramble with my doctor.

The doctor this night took me a walk which greatly resembled our expeditions after the badger. He went up hill and down dale, and where the stream was broadest, there he would leap across it; and he sang, and exulted, and seemed all at once to have perfectly recovered both his good spirits and his friendliness towards me.

It might have been midnight, when we returned again to the mill which lay still and dark before us in the gorge of the valley. Behind us stood the moon, quite above the ridge of the hill, and silvered the little window of the room where Sybil slept. Single drops of water fell from the closed weir, gleaming in their fall like silver, and where they touched the water there was a trembling bright circle, which slowly extended itself further and further.

"Do you know the tale of 'Little Thorn-Rose?'" the doctor asked me. "There was once upon a time a wonderfully beautiful princess, and she dwelt in a thick wood. She pricked herself with her spindle and fell into a deep sleep. Continually the trees and bushes grew higher and ever higher, and became

thicker and ever thicker. No one knew at last where the princess slept. There came a knight who was destined by fate for the princess; to him alone the entangled branches opened; he woke her with a kiss and then she became his wife."

After he had related this tale he rested his head upon his hands, and his features assumed a grave, almost an angry expression, and he sang in a suppressed voice:

Down in a lonesome valley
The mill-wheel turneth round,
My true-love she has left me
Who there her dwelling found.

She promised me so kindly,
Gave me a gold-ring new,
But she her troth has broken
And the ring it broke in two.

"Away, away with these gloomy thoughts," he exclaimed, interrupting himself, and called out, "God is powerful! Good night, ex-apprentice! Remember me always: we shall have I hope a happy meeting."

"To-morrow," I returned laughingly.

"Who knows," he replied, and swung himself through the window, into his chamber.

* * * * *

The following day, when I came down-stairs, I found everybody in great excitement. It appeared that Dr. Burbus was nowhere to be found, and later a little peasant-boy brought a letter to the miller's wife which had been given to him by the doctor, who met him in the wood.

This letter must have contained some extraordinary tidings, for the miller was more cross than usual, and

Sybil came to table with eyes red from weeping. All, even down to the domestics wearied themselves with wondering whither he had betaken himself; but after several days, the lads and lasses, who had been right fond of him, having exhausted their imaginary suggestions, spoke and thought no more about him. It was only when I was with Sybil, that his name was mentioned, and it seemed to have very greatly pained her that the doctor had so suddenly disappeared.

But the wheel of my fate, which during the spring and summer had rolled along pleasantly amidst trees and flowers, had now suddenly to take a new direction, and the motive-power came in the shape of a letter from my uncle and guardian, who had written to my grandmother in C., and which had probably given occasion for a great and new family-council. The letter was as follows:

"It seems to me that your sluggard's life at the mill suits you very well; at least I have learnt from your cousin that you are grown stronger and taller. But that you, with your unanswerable levity never reflect upon the means of building up your future, and that you have never once written to me, that I might provide a new situation for you for the winter, that you should forget all this, in order to spend your precious youth in running after the cattle and taking birds' nests, does not surprise me at all, for I know you.

"Thank your good fortune, that you have found in me an unwearied guardian; and thanks be to my widespread acquaintance that I have found for you a place as apprentice in the manufacturing town of E, and above all, no place in a grocer's shop, but in that

of a draper, in the highly respectable house of John Casper Stieglitz and Co.

"You will go on foot to E. Arrived there, you will deliver the enclosed lines to our cousin Professor W., and this honoured friend will arrange your introduction to the house of business in the best and most agreeable manner.

"I have no desire to give you further advice. Should, however, this last little bit of hope with regard to your future successful career fail, I shall entirely relieve my hands of you, and you can then grasp the last anchor which remains to good-for-nothing young fellows — you can — enlist.

"For the rest, my children send their friendly greetings to you; I do the same, and remain, till further,

Your well-inclined
Uncle."

CHAPTER XXIII.

Out in the World!

THIS satisfactory epistle drew, as it were, a thick, black stroke under my quiet and peaceful mill-idyl, separating it from the present, so that the fragrant wood, the fresh, delicious air, the rushing, foaming water and the solitary mill itself, with its beloved and kindly people, had become like an imaged dream that was slowly but surely passing away, and which, though I yet stood in its midst, I could not hold back. Before me seemed to extend a wide, melancholy plain, peopled with figures of the Reissmehl character, whilst

on the far horizon floated the image of my friend, of my beloved Doctor Burbus, from whom, however, not one of us had received a line since he left.

Although the distance to the city of E, where my new life must begin, was only a journey of a few hours, yet even this, unaccompanied by the practical friend with whom I had travelled hither, seemed gloomy and uninviting. I was by nature neither timid nor shy, but the quiet, peaceful life of the forest mill had taken such entire possession of my whole being, that any necessity to enter into the outer, and to me cold and unaccustomed, world seemed extremely painful.

And now my last day and night at the mill were come. The mill-clapper, which had hitherto rocked me, as it were, to sleep, now prevented me from closing my eyes; the rushing of the mill-stream, which with its monotonous murmur had hitherto filled my slumber with glorious dream-pictures, was to me this night nothing but the roar and tumult of the world-stream which swept me away from the peaceful shore into the wild surging waters of life, seeming to say to me in pitiless scorn, "Sink or swim!"

The following morning they took the most affectionate leave of me.

Cousin Christopher pressed my hand and said: "When you have leave of absence you must come to see us. It will be a pleasure to us; only you must, at least, serve for a whole year before you ask such an indulgence. The miller's wife did not say much; as for Sybil, she kissed me in the most affectionate manner, and when I felt her warm tears on my cheek, all the firmness and composure which I had hitherto maintained gave way, and bursting into an uncontrol-

able flood of tears, I rushed out of the house and hurried up the valley.

Francis and Elsbeth I did not see. The determined character of the latter would not have allowed any emotion to have been seen on her countenance, therefore our parting was without either a word or a hand-pressure. Caspar, in his white cap, nodded me a farewell out of the window.

It was a fine autumnal morning, and the higher I ascended the clearer and brighter became the sky above me; for the thick mist in the bottom of the valley had entirely concealed it from sight. The moss and grass at my feet glittered with a thousand points of light; bushes and trees were hung with water-drops, spangled as with innumerable jewels.

I made a halt at the old cross on the high ground, and seated myself on the mouldering stone at its base. The deep valley lay below me, but it was invisible, for the brightly ascending sun pressed down the mist into its bosom so that it looked like a mountain-lake of grey water, to me an enchanted sea in whose depths lay the spot where from the earliest days of childhood I had enjoyed innocent and happy hours. Listening with attentive ear, I still heard the clapper of the mill-wheel and the lowing of the cattle in the forest-pastures; and now I heard distant shots in quick succession, which I knew to be Caspar's, who by this means, again took leave of me.

Thus then was I thrust out of the enchanted ground and stood upon the hill-top, a poor, outcast youth. I remained a long time beside the old cross, wavering in my mind. Several times I felt inclined to go back to the mill and beg cousin Christopher to engage me as a

millers' boy, and let me remain there for years. What did I care about the noisy, splendid world which lay beyond? I knew nothing about it, and the fear of being dragged into its whirlpool made me shudder.

In after years, when, on my long journeys and in distant lands, I have come, especially at night-fall, to a solitary homestead or a deep valley with its mill, it has seemed a marvel to me how people could be contented and even happy to live thus separated from the world. So it seemed till I recalled this very morning by the old cross. Then again, in those later years, how often, amidst the tumult of the great world, have I said, as now on this quiet autumnal morning: when I am rich enough and am an old man, I will go back to that valley, and there, forgetting the world and forgotten by it, spend the remainder of my days. —

It was this resolution which enabled me at length to take a quick farewell of the country which had become so dear to me and calmly and resolutely to pursue my way to E. which place I was thus enabled to reach in good time. I had no adventures on the road as formerly with Doctor Burbus, nor, indeed, did I seek for any. The only incident which occurred was, when a friendly coachman who was ascending a long hill with his carriage, invited me to ride. The horses went at a foots-pace, switching their long tails to keep off the flies and letting their ears droop forwards. The day had become very warm and the driver urged me to accept his offer. I at first objected on the plea that I had but very little money to pay him. At this he laughed, saying he wanted no money, but that if I would get in I should find myself very comfortable on the soft cushions. He was an elderly man with a dry, good-

humoured countenance and manner — an old soldier who had served as sergeant in the hussars, and was on that account an important person in my eyes. On inquiring about his military experience, he opened up to me so much that was unpleasant in the life of the soldier, and which made it anything but attractive to my imagination, that my firm resolve became only the more strengthened, from this day forth to labour with such industry and attention, that the necessity should never arise, as my guardian threatened, when I might have to enlist.

When we had reached the top of the long hill, the old coachman drew up, and pointing out the church-towers of E in the distance, I alighted. I took leave of the kindly old man and now cheerfully descending the hill marched on towards my destination whilst the post-chaise drove on merrily; for some time I could yet see the trotting horses, then nothing more than a cloud of dust.

The wealthy manufacturing town of E presented a totally different appearance to C., the only large town with which I was as yet acquainted. There the heavy Gothic tower and old black masonry rose up above the pointed, curiously-ornamented gables of the tall burger-houses of former centuries: here you saw lofty and pointed church-towers covered with grey slate; monstrous, strange-looking chimneys; large buildings with innumerable windows, and every thing seemed modern and new; all the buildings washed white or of some light tint of colour and looking fresh with their bright, green-painted Venetian blinds. On all hands you were aware of the presence of steam; here smoke, black-grey, poured out of tall chimneys, as I had seen on

steamboats; and there on the other hand white as snow. And what a noise and bustle there was in the streets into which I looked! Here a clattering and a racketting; there a rushing of water, and as I glanced into one of the houses which I passed I saw hundreds of wheels, large and small, incessantly turning, with an arrow-like rapidity, that made me feel almost dizzy. Then, too, there was a peculiar, sharp smell in some of the streets, those, for instance, lying on the river, the bridges of which I crossed, and where, looking down, I saw numbers of men busily washing scarlet or other coloured fabrics, so that the water was dyed by them. I met also great numbers of wagons laden with bales of goods or else with coal.

I was in an entirely new world, and drew forth from my pocket, as my sole sheet-anchor, the letter addressed to my cousin the Professor, making inquiries here and there, from different people whom I met as to his whereabouts, always politely taking off my hat as I did so. But nobody seemed even to know the name of the Professor. At length, however, I was fortunate enough to put my question to a kindly-hearted man, who then conducted me through interminably long streets, in order to point out the dwelling of my cousin. I had already been afraid that he might live in the neighbourhood of one of those clattering and whizzing manufactories, all the greater, therefore, was my satisfaction, when my friendly conductor led me to a gentle ascent just out of the town and shewed me a small house of a pale yellow colour standing amongst green trees, as the one that I was in quest of.

I ascended a somewhat steep path, with a beating heart, and shortly found myself standing before a door,

the upper part of which was lattice-work, and at the bell of which I modestly rang. An elderly lady, with a kind and sensible countenance, who was already in the garden, opened the door and inquired my business.

It seemed to me the moment I beheld this lady that I had seen her somewhere before, but the more I tried to remember where and when the less I succeeded. I presented my letter, and the lady, inviting me to come into the garden, which I saw at a glance surrounded the house, asked a young girl who was busy watering a large number of plants and flowers where her father was.

The girl glanced up from her work and seemed to look at me with some amazement. She had the same clear, friendly eyes as the elder lady.

"Papa is in his room," she replied, "and now is walking."

This young girl also appeared to me not unknown; yet where I had seen her I could not conceive any more than in the former case.

The lady took the letter and went into the house whence she soon returned smiling, and offering me her hand, said, in the kindest manner possible:

"I am very glad to see you. You are very like your mother. I was struck with the likeness the moment I saw you, but was not sure that it was you yourself. Now come in to your cousin and receive your opening-lecture. But you needn't be afraid!"

Then turning to the girl she said: "Emma, this is your cousin, of whom we were speaking, and who has come here to learn a trade."

Emma set down her watering-can and said to me in a somewhat grave tone:

"Indeed! my cousin, I'm glad, but—" and so saying she glanced down at my dusty shoes; "you have come on foot; you must be hungry; I'll fetch you something to eat."

The lady replied smiling; "yes, do so, my child," and went before me into the house.

CHAPTER XXIV.

My Cousin the Professor.

HERE everything was quite different to what it was at the mill. Before the door stood a row of beautiful orange and lemon-trees in tubs. We passed through rooms in which prevailed a soft, agreeable twilight from the green curtains which were drawn in the windows to keep out the hot sunshine. At length, we were in the presence of my cousin, the professor, who was seated in a room cram-full of remarkable objects. One entire wall was occupied by books; against another stood several immense telescopes and an electrical-machine, with which I had become familiar in my school-days, to say nothing of brightly polished brass instruments and strange-looking things, the purport of which was a mystery to me.

The professor sat in a large, brown-leather-covered arm-chair with his right leg crossed over the left knee and was working the point of the foot as well as the forefinger of the right hand, keeping time in so doing. I had abundant leisure to observe both the room and its occupant, because he still continued calmly reading from a large book which lay open before him

on a small table. His wife in the meantime remained standing in the doorway.

He was a large-made, but dried-up looking man, already far advanced in life; had a pale, though good-tempered countenance and wore a brown wig. In one corner of the room stood a large brass cage in which was a white parrot, such as I had before seen in menageries, and this creature was apparently the cause of my cousin first deigning to notice me. The bird spread out his red top-knot, turned his head confidently towards me and said, whilst I, as a matter of course, was standing perfectly still, in a loud voice and as articulately as if from a human tongue:

"Filou!"

On this my cousin closed his book, took a pinch of snuff from the open box before him, and said, in a grave and solemn tone:

"Ay, ay! Joco salutes you and is beforehand with me, inasmuch as he calls you '*Filou*,' which is the same as 'young rascal.' This expression, however, spite of your guardian's experience may be too strong, and I should hardly have made use of it on a first occasion, still it cannot be wholly denied that you deserve the name of a young, misbehaved-relative, as your uncle has, for good, or rather for ill, informed me."

"Cousin," stammered I, greatly embarrassed and becoming as crimson as the crest of the uncivil parrot, "I have most truly and earnestly determined to give my uncle no further cause of complaint."

"Very good," returned the professor, "only fulfil your praiseworthy intentions, and as it is in every one's power to amend his ways; don't stop with the

mere intention; for do you not know the proverb, that 'hell is paved with good intentions,' and in life also people are only too glad to walk upon them."

I promised to do my utmost, endeavoured gently to excuse myself without directly calling in question my uncle's accusations, and promised again to be industrious and attentive in my new situation, on which my cousin dismissed me in a much more affectionate manner than he had received me.

"Go now," he said, "for you must be tired and hungry. My wife will give you some refreshment, and I must continue in action for another half-hour, for the circulation of the blood is brought into greater activity by regular and continuous exercise, which is in the highest degree necessary for the health of the body."

I quickly turned to the door, and as I left the room saw that the worthy professor was again agitating in regular time, the forefinger of his right hand and the toe of his right foot, which action my entrance had interrupted. This seemed to me exceedingly odd, as did also the conclusion of his speech, that he would yet take exercise. Afterwards, when I became more intimately acquainted with the family, I learned that my cousin, who regarded the mere taking of walks as waste of time, very rarely left his house, but as he had an idea that the very slightest continuous motion of the body was sufficient to keep the blood in healthy circulation, he was accustomed to sit for hours together simply moving a finger and a toe, and that this was what his daughter meant when she said that her father "sat walking."

This cousin of mine was indeed a very sir.

man. He had been a deep and zealous student from his youth, living very retired and self-absorbed, never undertaking any great journeys though he possessed the means to do so. The fact was that he was unable to tear himself from study, or to give up old habits.

At one period of his life he was appointed professor of mathematics at a certain university, where he took up his residence, but soon threw up his appointment from a very peculiar circumstance. The hall in which his lectures were given was irregular in its construction, and the chair of the professor stood opposite two dissimilar windows, the one being tall and circular-topped, the other smaller and square. The sight of these ill-accordant windows was so disturbing to his mind that he could not keep his thoughts under control excepting by fixing his eyes steadily upon his manuscript, but as soon as he again looked up and was confronted by these two irregular objects his whole being was thrown into disharmony; he became confused, out of tune and depressed. Instead, however, of making known to any one the cause of his strange and unhappy condition, he suddenly threw up his appointment with its accompanying pension, and came back to this place, where he kept up intercourse with next to no one.

It is true that at first he joined a society, or club, which met in the evening, in a large handsome building, for mutual entertainment and relaxation. Here was a bowling-alley, and reading, billiard, and refreshment-rooms, and hither he was accustomed to spend several evenings in each week. But as even here he made but very few acquaintances, and seldom spoke to any one, this tall, dried-up and silent man remained amongst the social spirits of the place as a perpetual foreign

element, which, without any power of amalgamation, floated as it were on the surface, and was unpleasing to all. He would remain standing for hours before the billiard-table watching the course of the balls, and also the board on which the progress of the game was marked, and constructing therefrom all kinds of mathematical figures, or he would seat himself in a corner, take his cup of tea, drop asleep, and only wake up again towards ten o'clock at the pushing back of chairs or the banging of doors, at which hour the greater number of the members were returning home.

Here it was that several young men played him a very unpleasant trick, which finally dissevered him from society. One evening when he had taken his tea and, sitting with his head leaning back, had fallen fast asleep, they locked the doors of the adjoining rooms and put out the lights. All remained deeply silent for a short time, then suddenly the chairs were pushed about at the various tables, there was a noise of feet and opening and shutting of doors, which as usual awoke the professor, who at the same time heard various card-parties in the room, and talking going forward, as "hearts are trumps," and so on; in another part of the room he heard the movement of dominoes and the sound of the striking billiard-balls in the adjoining apartment, with the talking and laughter of the players.

The professor rubbed his eyes as he awoke, surprised to find himself surrounded by darkness and yet perceiving how every thing was going on in its usual course around him. He opened his eyes wide, looked round, pressed his hands before his face, but on re-

moving them, could not see a ray of light in that carefully darkened room. He began to be alarmed.

"Gracious powers in Heaven!" thought he, "I must be blind!"

He rose up from his chair, made a step forward, and struck against one of the members who was seated just by.

"Eh! eh!" exclaimed the gentleman, "my good sir! you nearly knocked me over!"

"But, my dear sir and friend!" returned the poor professor, in an agitated manner, "how can such an accident be prevented when this room is in total darkness?"

"Total darkness?" demanded several voices, "it is as bright here this evening as it ever was."

"You are joking, my good sir, I can see nothing!" exclaimed the professor, in a loud voice.

On this every one in the room rose and stood in a close circle around the presumably blind man.

"Let me look at your eyes, sir," said the well-known voice of a young physician.

"I see nothing particular in them," continued he, after a pretended inspection and the poor professor might have begun to take his misfortune greatly to heart, had he not heard in a distant part of the room a sound of suppressed laughter. All at once he was decided, and making his way towards the wall where the bell-cord hung, he rang violently for the waiter. The waiter instantly made his appearance, but behaving as if he saw nothing remarkable in the state of the room, the professor himself began to fear that he actually had become blind, and besought some of them, with a firm voice to have the goodness to conduct him home.

At that very moment, however, a new guest entering the room, demanded with astonishment why the whole place was in darkness? The professor hearing this, and preserving the greatest composure, took up his hat and walking-cane, and said, with unmoved calmness:

"Gentleman, a blind man must be excused if he cannot calculate where the well-merited blows fall which he considers himself justified in inflicting;" and so saying he struck right and left with his cane into the circle which had inclosed him.

In the first instance several would have resisted him, but the wisest amongst them, some of whom, indeed, thought the joke had been carried too far, counselled every one to be quiet and thus the professor was allowed to withdraw.

On the following morning he sent in his resignation of membership to the club, and at the same time one or two of the gentlemen who had been most severely struck, declared their determination to have the fullest satisfaction. But not one of them made his appearance, nor as a matter of course, did the professor ever come into their society again.

So much from the earlier life of the professor.

I found on my return to the garden that refreshments were there set out for me, and seating myself most comfortably with my kind hostess and her young daughter, my cousin Emma, I was requested to tell them all the family news—to tell them everything I knew about our mutual relatives, with whom they were well acquainted, and whom they had seen not more than a year before.

"Don't you know," said the professor's wife, "that you and we are really old acquaintance?"

"When I came to the garden-door and you opened it," said I, "I felt as if I had seen you, but I could not tell where."

"I'll tell you where it was," said Emma, "it was in a large and beautiful church—not so very long since, either—you were ill, cousin, and we found you lying on the ground; the old man who was shewing us the church lifted you up, and when we took you to your home—it was so strange!—the very house you lived in was that where we were wanting to go!"

"I wished to see my aunt, your old grandmother," continued the professor's wife; "we did not stay long, and you were so seriously ill when we took leave that you were not at all likely to recognise us."

This was a most agreeable discovery. I had been told of the singular coincidence of my being brought home by my own relatives; but all the rest had gone from me. This kind, agreeable mother and daughter, then, were my acquaintances of the church!

"But I should have recognised you," said I, quickly; "only I fancied in my delirium that it was a blessed saint out of the church with an angel by the hand, who had come down to inquire after my health."

We laughed heartily about this idea at our first meeting and this circumstance made us all the more readily acquainted.

The pleasant garden in which we were seated commanded a charming view over the town. A cheerful hope for the future opened my heart and after I had frankly communicated the chief particulars of my past experience to my agreeable relatives, at which they

laughed merrily, especially at what I told them about Doctor Burbus, and the amusing passages in our intercourse, we became most excellent friends, and Emma the same evening confided to me, that she thought I had behaved very ill at Reissmehl's.

"But you now think better of me, don't you?" I asked.

"We shall see," replied the little lady, prudentially, "that depends, as papa says, on how you conduct yourself for the future."

CHAPTER XXV.

Entering on a new Business.

I HAD, whilst in Mr. Reissmehl's employment, already passed the lowest steps of the tradesman's respectable calling, and I was now, as my cousin informed me, the following morning at breakfast, to mount somewhat higher. The business which had been chosen for me was that of draper and milliner, and at the same time connected with a small silk-mill, so that whilst I acquired the full use of the ell-wand I might be initiated into the mysteries of manufacturing.

The second part of the business consoled and satisfied me in some measure, as it promised an agreeable variety and lessened the repugnance which I felt in a general way, towards every kind of trade. To see something manufactured, created as it were, to see beautiful, shining silken fabrics woven out of the silk thread as produced by the worm, this was attractive to my imagination, and I must also confess, that the

thought that I was going to be a *manufacturer* was very flattering to me.

"The house with which you are now about to be connected," said my relative, "is the highly respectable firm of Messrs. Stieglitz and Comp. As far, however, as this company is concerned, you have nothing to do; for you there exists only Mr. and Mrs. Stieglitz; the *company* is only attached to the name, because there is a branch of the business in Amsterdam; but this trades only in indigo. These complicated business-firms, continued he, are not to my taste, who like to have a matter laid clearly before me, and who hate all unnecessary conditions and concealments. But you will find very curious trading combinations in this city; often you will see the deceased parents dragged in: thus, for instance, 'Jacob, Peter Holtzen's Son;' or the living will regard themselves merely as heirs and write, 'Kaspar Friedrich Schnitz, his Heirs;' frequently brothers will place their names together, as 'Henry Joseph and Leopold Kreutzweg's Sons and Heirs.'

"But now as regards your house, the principal is this same Mr. Stieglitz, otherwise a good and worthy man, though the whole management is very much more in the hands of Mrs. Stieglitz — indeed, she is the sole person, and you must especially take pains to win her favour, which will be easy enough, if you only conduct yourself well; for Mrs. Stieglitz is a most excellent and estimable woman — and" added he with a sarcastic smile — "very religious and God-fearing. Besides her, there is another person to be attended to and properly estimated in the business, this is the book-keeper Mr. Specht."

Thus having been instructed and enlightened, I

took a cordial leave of my agreeable relatives, little Emma and her mother, and with a beating heart, and accompanied by the professor betook myself to my new situation. The house occupied by the firm of "Messrs. Stieglitz and Comp." was a new and handsome building, and the shop, which occupied the entire ground floor displayed to the passers by, the most costly and beautiful wares, through such plate-glass-windows as I had never before beheld in my life.

I had this morning, be it understood, paid particular attention to my outward appearance. I wore a black suit, and my hair was carefully parted and brushed as smooth and bright as possible, all which, I must remark was the kind thoughtful work of my cousin Emma, who whilst so employed admonished me to be very discreet and well-mannered in my behaviour to Mrs. Stieglitz.

The professor took me past the shop to the private door of the house and rang the bell. The door was almost immediately opened by a little man in spectacles, who, as if somewhat annoyed, inquired what was our business. The man, a short, meagre figure, strongly built, and slightly deformed, and wearing a long, brown overcoat, and a yellowish white cravat, was Mr. Stieglitz himself. Having admitted us he opened a door in the same floor and bade us enter. We did so, and my cousin introduced me.

I was anxious to say a few befitting words so as to recommend myself to my new master, when he cut me short, by saying in a husky voice, and with the same surly manner as he had admitted us:

"Very good; I'll call my wife;" and so shuffled off in a pair of large, ill-fitting slippers.

This unfriendly manner of my *chef* produced a very unpleasant impression upon me, and almost immediately after I heard a voice say in a deep tone and with some warmth:

"Is it a matter then of such urgent necessity that I cannot have a quiet moment to attend to my business! Cannot the young man wait a little?"

The next moment, however, the speaker entered, a large, powerful elderly lady, with a strongly marked countenance and white hair which was most scrupulously arranged under a simple, but very becoming cap. At her waist hung an immense bunch of keys, and the yard measure, the sceptre of her rule, was in her hand.

My cousin introduced me to my new mistress, Madame Stieglitz, who at once invited the professor to take a chair. The two seated themselves and Mr. Stieglitz and I remained standing. She looked at me with a keen searching glance, then remarked to my cousin:

"I don't dislike the look of the young man; but I had imagined him taller and stronger."

Then turning to me:

"Have you a desire to make yourself acquainted with the shopkeeping business?" she asked somewhat brusquely; and I replied with some timidity, that I would do all in my power to acquaint myself with the subject, and especially as regarded the manufacturing of silks.

"Manufacturing?" returned Mrs. Stieglitz, "that is not to be thought of in the first instance. After you have practised measuring goods for two or three years, and have become expert in posting up the books, and by industry and good conduct have shown that you *can* be useful in the weighing-room, then we can talk

about manufacturing. What I require from you is honesty, punctuality, your eyes wide open, and obedience; the rest will come of itself."

"Yes, the rest will come of itself," repeated Mr. Stieglitz.

"When would you wish that the young man should enter your service?" inquired my cousin; "perhaps in the middle of the month, and he can in that case, spend the intervening eight days at my house."

How I thanked my relative for this kind suggestion, for this proposal that I should have yet eight leisure days, to spend in his beautiful garden! But my new mistress at once overturned all the castles in the air which I had quickly built up in thought, by her reply:

"Middle of the month, professor?" said she, "no; whenever any useful thing is to be learned people cannot begin too soon, and shopkeeping is not so easy, as many imagine. It may be more difficult, it is true, to acquire a knowledge of the higher sciences, nevertheless a great deal of time is necessary to become well acquainted with the innumerable articles with which we are surrounded and to learn how to keep the ledger accurately and with perfect neatness. Let the young man enter on his service to-day; we will soon find him something to do."

"Yes, we will soon find something to do," repeated the master.

My relation shrugged his shoulders and, taking up his hat and politely making his adieu to "Stieglitz and Comp.," shook hands with me, and hastened from the house.

I stood as it were rivetted to the spot and must

confess that I was nearer crying than laughing. Mrs. Stieglitz made a sign to her husband, who at once left the room, and we two now being alone, she made me an inaugural address which I shall never forget as long as I live.

"Young man," she said, "we are now alone and that is right. When I have anything disagreeable to say to my people, it is undesirable to do it in the hearing of any but myself and the one whom it immediately concerns. In the first place let me desire of you that what I now say be not repeated to any one in the house, nor yet to any one out of it; and furthermore I wish you clearly to understand that I can hold only three earnest discourses, three earnest appeals to the consciences of the people in my service, *firstly*, when they enter upon it, *secondly*, if their conduct be not such as I expect and will have it; *thirdly*, when I send them away.

"Now you are reported to me, by your uncle and guardian, to be of a thoughtless and unstable character, and one who is given to the playing of foolish tricks; I am requested therefore to keep a strict eye upon you, and to endeavour, if it be possible, to educate you as a useful member of society. This I will honestly endeavour to do, but then — you must help me.

"Understand me, young man. Merriment, when the day's work is done, is neither offensive to God nor man; and to this I make no objection, but — I have a mortal hatred of all foolish practical jokes. Work industriously; pray industriously, for without God's help not even a good work can be successfully carried through. This is the rule I lay down for myself;

hence I never begin a work without praying that I may have strength given me fully to complete it. But one must be sincerely religious and not merely so outwardly; and one must act the whole day through in the full knowledge of God's ever-present existence.

"Attach yourself to my bookkeeper Mr. Specht. He is a really good man, and does his duty like an honest servant who employs his talent well, and does not wrap it in a napkin.

"Now come with me. We are just taking stock, and you can be useful, according to your ability."

Deeply impressed by this address, which was solemn and admonitory, and which rung in my ears like the trumpet of the last judgment, I followed my mistress into a warehouse on an upper storey, whence I was desired to carry several pieces of merino and other such goods, down into a court below, lay them upon a table which was standing there, and carefully beat the dust out of them with a light stick.

When I had done this Mr. Stieglitz himself came and shewed me how to measure. Each separate piece of merino, or whatever other material it might be, was unfolded, carefully measured over, and then refolded. A very amusing pastime truly!

The court in which I was thus initiated into the first principles of the drapery-business, was inclosed on all sides by the backs of houses, so that I had before my eyes continually all the petty details which belong to the usually private business of domestic-life. From several windows clothes were hung out to dry; flower-pots stood in others, and that the plants themselves were duly watered was evidenced to me by the dingy streaks which had run down the walls. Cooks

were busied at various houses washing and preparing all kinds of vegetables for dinner, so that every now and then a green leaf or a piece of potatoe-peeling would fall down into the court below. The melancholy song of a blackbird which probably was sighing after freedom in its cage, as I was on my dusting-table, was answered by the song of a lively housemaid, with whom I could very sincerely declare, in the words of Faust's Gretchen, "my peace is gone; my heart is sad." I saw above my head a little piece of blue sky, and this was the only consolatory and kindly object that met my eye.

In the meantime I kept assiduously beating my merinos, and Mrs. Stieglitz, who several times looked out gravely and earnestly from the counting-house window, appeared satisfied with my industry. As the clock struck twelve she herself called me in to dinner.

This meal was taken in a room adjoining the counting-house and as I stood waiting I ventured a timid glance into this sanctum of business. Every thing here was far handsomer and more costly than at my former employer's. There were two large and handsome desks and a copying machine; several beautiful large maps and an almanack hung on the walls; large pattern-cards lay about on the table; large bundles of yellow, glossy silk were beautifully, and as if ornamentally, arranged in the separate compartments of a large press, which filled one side of the room. But what seemed most remarkable to me was that Mrs. Stieglitz herself sat at one of the desks, with her spectacles on, busily writing until the soup was on the table. Her husband stood in one corner and cut patterns from various pieces of cloth which lay before him.

At length we took our places at table, and here I first met the bookkeeper Mr. Specht, and I must confess that he did not make an agreeable impression upon me. Although probably not more than thirty there was an old look about him, and though his hair was black, yet his sallow complexion and tall figure reminded me disagreeably of my former colleague; still he was infinitely neater and more of a gentleman in his person and dress than was possible with Phillip. His manners were humble towards Mrs. Stieglitz, confidential towards her husband, patronizing towards me, and studiously polite towards the young lady employed in the shop. This latter was an inoffensive, modest young woman, whose natural timidity caused her continually to cast down her eyes and to look as if always ready to apologise even because she was in the world.

The dinner was excellent and commenced with a somewhat long grace. Mrs. Stieglitz helped to the soup, herself carved the dishes, and led the conversation. Mr. Specht talked freely, always agreeing, however, with Mrs. Stieglitz; whilst her husband whose sullen countenance wonderfully cleared up with the soup, ventured now and then a little joke, of which, however, nobody, excepting the young shop-woman, Mamsell Therese, took much notice.

"How do you like your work?" inquired Mrs. Stieglitz, addressing me, adding, "Arranging, Beating, Cleaning; one must always commence with A. B. C. You must learn your letters before you begin to read."

I replied, that I considered it extremely necessary to become familiar with the various materials one had to do with.

"Are you here for the first time?" continued she, still addressing me. I answered in the affirmative.

"You must be pleased with your cousin's house," she said, "it is nicely furnished, and has such a lovely garden and a fine view over the town."

"Yes, yes," said her husband, "when people are rich they can retire to their country-seats and end their days pleasantly in peace."

Mr. Specht laughed and cast a side-glance at me, and the young shop-woman also gave a little giggle.

"What's that?" returned Mrs. Stieglitz. "The professor, spite of his peculiarities, is an excellent man. He is very liberal to the poor, and I should be grieved if he were obliged in his old age to part with his beautiful garden and house."

I did not understand the bearing of these remarks at the time, but I was thankful to my mistress for having asserted that my cousin was an excellent man.

After dinner I returned to my former occupation; and so continued disturbing the dust in endless bales of goods until sunset, when I was desired by Mamsell Therese to clean and light the two large lamps by which the shop was lighted in the evening, and which I undertook readily; for I had a very good notion of all practical work, and could not fail to observe that I gave entire satisfaction.

At eight o'clock the shop was closed, after which we were employed on the great pattern cards which I had seen in the morning lying on the counting-house table. From these the patterns of such goods as were now sold out had to be removed and new ones placed in their stead.

As every kind of work in which paste, pasteboard

and paper, were concerned, had always been particularly attractive to me, I had within the next few days the opportunity of winning the favour of my mistress. She wished to have a new pattern-card of silks prepared, and desired me to take the beautiful materials to the bookbinder, who was to arrange the colours artistically and enclose each separate pattern with a fine line of gold-paper. I asked permission to undertake the task myself, and completed it so entirely to her satisfaction that she said to me, with a kind smile:

"Come, come! I see that there is something in you."

But to return to the first evening. I busied myself over the pattern-card, whilst Mr. Specht and the young shop-woman took it by turns to read aloud a book of rather a devotional character, which however not appearing to interest Mr. Stieglitz, he retired to his own room on the plea of headache. His wife, on the contrary, listened attentively, and Specht occasionally made comments as he went on, which were no doubt considered edifying.

At ten o'clock the business of the day was over. The doors were locked and we went to our chambers. Mine was situated between that of Mr. Specht and a room appropriated to the private use of the people employed in the business — a sitting-room for them in fact, though not often used for that purpose.

Wearied by the events and the occupation of the day I lay down on my bed and was soon asleep, hearing however as long as consciousness remained, the voice of Mr. Specht singing a hymn.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The Ware-rooms. Tickets.

AFTER I had been fully occupied for several days in carefully dusting various kinds of goods; and when every piece of ribbon, silk or other stuff, had been carefully measured, by which means the property of the firm was accurately determined, I was employed in assisting Mr. Stieglitz to replace the goods in the ware-rooms. This I found to be a much more agreeable employment and one much more to my taste than the occupation of the last several days. There were thousands of articles which it was a pleasure to me even to behold, and which furnished me with a great deal to think about, at the same time that they deliciously excited my imagination.

Mr. Stieglitz, now that he was alone with me, seemed quite a different man; he was much more communicative and friendly in his manners, and seemed always willing to tell me about my own country or to give me information respecting the many foreign articles with which we were surrounded. What his real position in the business was, I could not make out. His opinions did not seem to carry weight with them; neither his wife nor Mr. Specht referred to him in any case; in fact they scarcely gave him an opportunity of speaking. It was evident also to me, on the other hand, that he greatly disliked the bookkeeper, and I soon noticed that he never willingly spoke to him, nor even listened when he related any thing, as he often did, at meal-times or in the evening; whilst if he read,

either from the Bible, or any other book, he generally walked out of the room, with his usually sullen expression of countenance.

But now, with me, in the ware-rooms, he was very cheerful and communicative. For instance, when we were folding and laying the Turkey carpets together, and I expressed my admiration of the beautiful patterns and brilliant colours, he asked if I had any notion how they were made.

I replied that I had not, farther than that I supposed they were woven.

"Now, I'll tell you," said he, in the most open-hearted manner. "These beautiful carpets are made in the villages near the charming city of Smyrna, far away in Turkey. They are woven all in one piece; and from twenty to thirty people are employed upon a single carpet. They begin in the middle and work on separately with needle and thread until the carpet has grown into the size which they wish it to be."

When we were amongst the rich velvets and silks he told me about Genoa and Venice, and speaking of the latter city, the "Queen of the Waters," as he called her, he sighed deeply.

Struck by his altered manner I timidly suggested that perhaps he had been there.

"*Per Dio*," replied he with sudden animation, "I should think so! That is a city! Instead of streets nothing but water; instead of driving in carriages people go about in little black boats, called gondolas, and recline on cushions of glossy black satin, — just such beautiful satin as this," pointing to a rich piece of these goods, — "and far better have stayed there," added he with a tone of annoyance, "and been made into

cushions for a beautiful Venetian lady, instead of being cut into dresses for stupid German women! I mean the satin," said he, correcting himself, and looking quickly round, as if to see that nobody heard him.

When we were amongst the broad, handsome ribbons, he had many a merry story to tell about life in Paris; and no sooner were we busied with Dutch linens than he took a paper from his pocket, unwrapped a cigar, which he lighted, desiring me however, beforehand, to open the window.

Independently of the goods themselves, the very tickets which were hung to them were a great source of interest to me. Here, for instance, was a ship, with all sail set about to enter a little harbour in a far-distant part of the world. The sailors waved their hats, and slender palms and bread-fruit trees seemed to bid them welcome from the shore. Oh Heavens! if I could only, for once, see that in reality! How I envied the very sailors, who stood on deck and who seemed to me full of delighted astonishment. As I by this means seemed actually to behold the sea, so when looking at stuffs made of camel's-hair, I saw the long caravan-trains slowly progressing over the boundless desert of sand. Here indeed I was not so utterly a stranger, for I had often followed the camel, with a little red monkey sitting on its back, through the streets of our town, fondly wishing that I might some time be fortunate enough to see the countries of which these animals were natives.

The linens of the low-countries displayed a Dutchman printed in gold, who was blowing immense clouds of smoke from his clay pipe. Velvets of all colours had their tickets, hanging from silver cords. Some

fabrics there were bordered with bright coloured stripes, and cloth with long-haired fag-ends, just beyond which was printed in large letters of gold, the firm by which they were manufactured.

With all this inspection and conversation, we were still very industrious, and cleared out the ware-rooms with the greatest assiduity. Mr. Stieglitz smoked, told his stories and was very amusing. He now brought forth a large paper-box, in which, when the lid was removed, I saw a number of beautiful flowers made of coloured cambric, feathers and gold-leaf, and which, when taken into the hand, gave forth a delicious and mysterious sort of perfume, like the pinetree twigs with their golden banners which are used at Christmas festivities.

"These flowers," said my master, "are bought by the peasants and used for their rogations and other processions: do you know what rogations and processions are?"

As I came from a Catholic town, although my family, as well as that of Stieglitz, were of the Evangelical faith, I told him, in reply, that I knew what both were perfectly well, and that I had in my younger days seen many beautiful processions, and that I thought of them with great pleasure. I grew quite enthusiastic as I spoke of the bells ringing, and the thousands of beautifully dressed people who thronged the streets, and of the streets themselves, how they were so beautifully decorated with lovely garlands, and pine-branches, which extended right across the street, from house to house; but above all, I remembered with most lively delight the beautiful crowns which, hanging loosely on these garlands, waved freely in the

air; those crowns were made of large flowers and white egg-shells, and decorated with little pieces of glass and bright-coloured ribbons; and when a light wind blew the twigs rustled and the pieces of glass rung with such a clear, sweet sound; and all the time you heard the earnest, solemn tones of the music which accompanied the advancing procession! Thousands of people filled the streets; first came the inferior clergy in their white and violet dresses, after them priests in still richer and ever richer garments, till at length they were covered with gold and silver embroidery; then came girls all dressed in white, who strewed flowers as they went, and were followed by those who carried the red velvet baldachin, surmounted with the silver lamb, with the white banner, under which walked the old Bishop with his heavy mitre on his snow-white hair; and before him was carried the Host in a golden tabernacle.

How enthusiastically we talked of these things, the master and his apprentice! and so doing we had forgotten the bales of goods which surrounded us, so completely had the flowers which we held in our hands carried me back, by their peculiar scent, as by magic, into the past. I beheld again the throng of people in the brilliant procession, and the scattered rose-leaves; I inhaled again the fragrant incense, and again, in the background, saw the large cake which never failed on such occasions for us children at dinner.

Mr. Stieglitz seemed also to be luxuriating in the memory of past days, but looked gloomy, with down-cast eyes.

"And the beautiful Catholic churches," said he, "how glorious they are, and how delicious is the deep

twilight that prevails in them — that magical, subdued light which is admitted through painted glass! Have you seen and remarked all this?"

"Yes," replied I warmly, and all at once seemed to come back to me the time when I played and prayed in my childish way in those beautiful, glorious aisles! Ah, and I remembered, too, that miserable day when I was turned out from Reissmehl's, and how I was seized with fever as I sat before the image of the Mother of God, and where I saw for the first time my young cousin Emma, whom till then I had never seen.

"I don't at all like our Evangelical churches," said I, after a pause, in a somewhat conceited manner; "one sees nothing in them but white walls, brown seats, and the clergyman in his black gown."

"Well, to be sure!" returned my master, with a queer kind of smile, "those are extraordinary opinions. Take care that nobody except me hears you say so in this house. Why, you would drive Mr. Specht into fits, if he heard you give vent to such inspirations of the woman of Babylon. Don't you ever say that you have pleasure in Catholic processions. As far as I am concerned," added he with a sigh, "I who have been so long in beautiful Italy; it is all a matter of indifference to me whether a man prays. 'Our Father in Heaven!' or '*Ave Maria!*'"

At that moment I heard some one cough near us, and looking up I perceived Mr. Specht in the room. Mr. Stieglitz sat there as if in angry embarrassment, with one of the holy flowers in his hand and the cigar in his mouth.

"There is some one smoking here," said the book-keeper, "Mrs. Stieglitz perceived this smell, which is

so extremely unpleasant to her, in the counting-house, and desired me to find out where it was."

Mr. Stieglitz, who, beyond any question of doubt, was the offender, threw his cigar on the floor, and trod upon it.

"For Heavens sake!" exclaimed the bookkeeper, and picked up the crushed remains, "we might in this way have the house burned down!"

I question, however, whether it was so much this anxiety, which induced him to carry away the extinct cigar, as that he might be able to produce the *corpus delicti*. But he did not go before he had cast a glance of much disapprobation upon me; and we were again alone.

Mr. Stieglitz scratched his head with an air of vexation; and we finished our work in the ware-rooms without another word being spoken.

During dinner, contrary to his usual custom, Mr. Stieglitz enunciated not a single little joke. His wife looked very grave, and Mr. Specht, as it seemed to me, more repulsive than ever. I did not lift my eyes from my plate, and could not help looking like a poor, detected sinner when, after dinner, I entered the counting-room at the desire of Mrs. Stieglitz.

"Now attend!" said she, "I told you the other day that I only allowed myself three severe lectures with my people. One you have already had to begin with, and the second you would hardly have escaped to-day but that on the whole I am by no means dissatisfied with you. One thing, however, I must say, and you must attend to: attach yourself in this house only to me and to Mr. Specht. — to no one else. Do you understand?"

I understood her speech only too well, and I felt very sorry that I must consider the companionship and pleasant conversation of my master, who seemed to me to be a very sensible and cheerful man, as forbidden fruit.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Mistress and Master.

SPITE of that which had lately occurred in the ware-rooms and which had brought down upon me such grave animadversion, I could not prevent myself from paying the greatest attention to every thing that Mr. Stieglitz either said or did. As I was quite certain that I must not look to Mr. Specht for any information on this subject, I naturally turned to Mamsell Therese, but I soon discovered that she was no way disposed to enlighten me. She told me no more than I myself, already knew, that Mr. Stieglitz did not concern himself with the business of the firm; that he left every thing to his wife; that formerly he used to make great journeys; and that he was a distant relation of his wife's before marriage.

I resolved therefore to restrain my curiosity until the day came, towards which I looked forward with great joy, when I might pay a visit to my kind relatives in the town. Mamsell Therese had told me, soon after I came, that when I had been a month in the business Mrs. Stieglitz would certainly allow me to spend the Sunday afternoon with my cousins, good-naturedly informing me at the same time, that I had better not, in the first instance ask to go out, but wait

for the permission to be voluntarily given by that lady.

Four weeks were soon passed, and I must say, without being vain-glorious, that I had already gained considerable knowledge of the drapery-business; that I had been very industrious and had endeavoured to do my best in every respect. I have perhaps to thank the stern countenance which Mrs. Stieglitz could assume in a moment, for these endeavours, as well as my firm determination to train myself into a skilful tradesman. If she perceived the slightest thing out of order and her quick eye observed every thing; if a letter were carelessly sealed, if the address were crookedly written, or the slightest error of expression or orthography occurred, her countenance instantly became stern, and in a single "eh! eh!" she comprised her correction.

Even in the shop, where as yet my principal business consisted in putting things straight, nothing escaped her eye, down to a crookedly placed piece of goods, or even an ill-tied knot. The colours too of all the different goods must be arranged agreeably to the eye, so as to present perfect harmony of tint or shade; and all the tickets hung regularly, so as to form straight lines, within the glass cases. The lamps, which had hitherto been somewhat neglected, I now took especially under my care. Their glass-shades were as clean and bright as it was possible to keep them and the improved effect of light which I thus gave to all our places of business, won for me now and then an approving glance from our great female head.

Our business was one of the best of its kind in the

whole city. "Messrs. Stieglitz and Comp." sold at a higher price than any other; and they were proud of doing so because they dealt only in the very best goods that were produced. Mrs. Stieglitz was also a woman of remarkable taste, and our lady customers deferred much to her judgment in making their purchases, especially in matters of dress, although she was always curt in her manner, and often blunt even in her speech, especially where it concerned the outward appearance of her customers.

"Pardon me, Madame X.," I have heard of her saying to an elderly lady whose ambition was to look very juvenile, "but when people come to our time of life, bright colours are not becoming to them." Or to another who was extremely plain, "My dear lady, a dress of this showy kind would attract the eyes of all the world to you."

She however did not obtrude her opinions; merely gave them when they were asked, but then always with perfect honesty; and her suggestions were so sensible and her knowledge so correct that no one thought of calling them in question. She was, however, very rarely seen in the shop, and that only when some customer especially asked for her.

"She had, by this means, as may be imagined, acquired a great fame in the female world of fashion, and any one whose wardrobe was supplied and regulated by Mrs. Stieglitz was sure to make an elegant figure. From this cause she had many customers who did not in person frequent the shop, some living in the town itself, others in the country or in distant places. The toilettes of these ladies were supplied by her according to their requirements. Of course they were

all personally known to her, and it was probably necessary that from time to time they should visit her.

When a lady, for instance, came, whose intention it was to place herself in Mrs. Stieglitz hands, such an accurate description was taken of her person as would almost put to shame a police-office. The book in which these personal descriptions were entered was kept by Mr. Stieglitz himself. On one occasion when I was with him alone, he spoke of this book, according to his oriental fancy, as the Grand Sultan's Harem, and before sitting down to make a new entry, would lay aside his morning coat, dress himself handsomely, and instead of his old down-at-the-heel slippers, put on a beautiful new pair of green morocco ones. Madame Stieglitz brought him in at the same time a glass of excellent wine, in an exquisitely cut wine-glass, with delicate biscuits. Then he sat down and entered.

Madame N., wife of the landed-proprietor Mr. N.

Height, 5 feet, 4 inches.

Countenance, oval.

Complexion, fair.

Hair, blond.

Eyes, blue.

And so on, till the most accurate full-length portrait was given in words; after which was added; "prefers silks or soft woollen material, blue or pink."

An entry of this kind, accompanied by accurate measurement, was sufficient for any customer to the end of time. Of course she would gradually become older; but that in any case would be provided for. All that was necessary was whenever an order came to turn to the page or pages which referred to this parti-

cular customer, and Mrs. Stieglitz would select exactly that which was becoming either for summer or winter wear. This book, as I have already said, was in Mr. Stieglitz's keeping; it was locked up in his desk and kept with such jealous care, that even if the key had been left in the lock, inquisitive hands and eyes could not have reached it, for the desk itself opened with a secret spring which only he himself and his wife understood. Even Mr. Specht, who had command of so much in the business, had only ventured on one occasion to turn over a page of this sacred volume, when the head of the firm sprang upon him like an enraged lion, and he was only saved from a box on the ear, by the interposition of Mrs. Stieglitz herself.

It is true, that the head of the firm was every now and then liable to outbreaks of rage about the most insignificant trifles. On such occasions his wife quietly sent away any one who might happen to be in the counting-house, and then let him storm himself out, after which she would take him to his own room, which was on the ground floor, whilst she had her own spacious apartment on the first storey.

No one entered Mr. Stieglitz's room, excepting his wife and some of the domestics, and the windows which opened into the court were always closed with green blinds. On such days as he was overtaken by passion he was not again visible. On one occasion, however, being obliged to go across the court, I saw that one of his windows was partly opened, and he sitting within in a large arm-chair, looking very pale and emaciated, with a crimson fez on his head. A large open book lay upon his knee, in which he appeared to

be reading, nevertheless he perceived me and nodded, but without speaking a word.

The Sunday was to us an extremely pleasant and peaceful day. Contrary to the custom of many German tradespeople, the shop was never opened, for "the day of the Lord," as Mrs. Stieglitz, was accustomed to say, "ought to be kept worthily, and without any sound of the week's work."

In the forenoon I accompanied Mr. Specht to church; Mr. and Mrs. Stieglitz were also regular in their attendance, and all with the duest observance. Mr. Specht paid particular regard to my devotion; he said that it was unbecoming and a scandal to the congregation to gaze about one during service. Mrs. Stieglitz herself examined me on our return regarding the sermon, in which I was able to give her satisfaction, for I had an excellent memory and had been accustomed to this kind of exercise from my childhood.

The living at the shop was excellent; and on Sundays we had an extra course and also wine; the master of the house emptied his bottle with an extraordinary relish and was more lively and social. He indulged himself freely in little jokes at the expense of Mr. Specht and Mamsell Therese, and while he kept within bounds, his wife laughed with him. On this day, likewise, the preacher of our church, Mr. Sprosser, a stout, cheery sort of man, frequently made his appearance with the afternoon coffee, when he and the book-keeper would enter into religious discussion, mostly as it seemed to me, with a design to edify Mamsell Therese and myself. The appearance of the preacher was mostly a signal to Mr. Stieglitz to withdraw, followed by the compassionate glance of the divine, who would

sigh forth "Poor man!" Mrs. Stieglitz, on the contrary, generally remained, when I observed that her endeavour was to give the polemical discourse a practical turn by speaking of the condition of the community and of certain pious poor families who were maintained by her bounty.

When the preacher on the fourth Sunday had taken his leave, Mrs. Stieglitz, to my great delight, gave me permission to visit my relations, on condition that I returned home by eight o'clock, giving me at the same time a note for the professor written by herself.

Any one may easily imagine with what joy I now hurried along the streets to reach that pleasant house without farther loss of time.

Again I found Emma and her mother in the garden. They were reading, and my cousin was, as usual at this hour, sitting in his study taking his exercise.

I presented my letter to him, and the parrot exclaimed, "*Bon jour!*"

"You see," said the professor, when he had read the letter, "how the bird of the forest gives you to-day, and with good reason, a different greeting to what it did on the former occasion. I say, *with good reason*, because your female head, Mrs. Stieglitz, writes a very agreeable report of you; she says she is perfectly satisfied with your behaviour, so far. Go on in this way, doing the very best for yourself and I will not fail to make your guardian acquainted with this good news. Now go back into the garden and shew my wife this letter."

I joyfully obeyed and my two kind friends seemed greatly pleased by the praise which Mrs. Stieglitz gave me. Emma looked delighted, gave me her hand, and called me, for the first time dear cousin.

We seated ourselves in the garden, and I related the experience of my new situation, sketching the character of the various members of the Stieglitz family in so life-like a manner that all laughed, even the grave old professor, who had now joined us.

"If," said I, in conclusion, "I could only learn something more correctly about that strange master of mine! I really do not know what sort of a position he holds in the house and the business!"

"I will try to give you some light on this subject," replied my cousin. "It is right, and even indispensably necessary for people to know something about those amongst whom they live — nay, to know all about them. The head of your house is, without question, a curious character, though in truth nobody knows very much about him. A distant relation of his wife, the parents of the two young people determined to marry them in order to unite the already considerable property which each possessed. Young Stieglitz was sent out into the great trading world that he might gain the necessary knowledge for the management of their vast concerns. He made great journeys; went to Italy, France and Spain — nay, with a ship of his own house to Constantinople and Smyrna, and spent some years in Alexandria. When he came back he was strangely altered; he had become melancholy and his former clear intellect was enfeebled, at least his mind seemed to have lost its energy. It appeared that on a caravan-journey through the desert he had received a wound in the head in an encounter with the Arabs, and this probably might explain the sad change which had taken place in him. The father of Madame Stieglitz was living at that time, and the quiet, well-conducted

business, into which the young man entered, was so beneficial to him that he apparently very nearly, if not wholly, recovered. He married, as had been long arranged, the present Madame Stieglitz, who has been a most admirable wife, and perhaps, the only person capable of managing him. At first he was in the habit of frequenting the society of his own class; used to go to the various hotels where they met, but the least excess in drinking threw him into a dangerous condition. The remembrance of his old life returned as a reality to him; he grew vivacious and talkative and would sometimes entertain the company for half the night by the wonderful stories of his adventures. At other times he broke forth into the most unrestrained violence, which was disagreeable and even dangerous to those who were about him. For instance he had acquired whilst in Spain, a remarkable dexterity in throwing the knife or dagger at any determined spot. One evening he practised this skill for a considerable time to the amazement and delight of the company till the idea suddenly occurred to him that some one should hold an ace of cards against the wall and he would drive his knife through it. Each of the company laughingly declined the dangerous proof of skill. He in the meantime became all the more serious and urgent, till at length they saw with horror that his eyes flashed with a gloomy fire and he was heard to mutter with a frightful oath that if such and such persons whom he named, would not instantly hold the card he would hurl the large table-knife which he held in his hand at their hearts. What was to be done? After some consideration the card was held, and he, standing at from ten to twelve paces distance, hurled the knife

so dexterously that the point remained sticking in the ace.

"It will easily be imagined that after such proceedings his company would be carefully avoided. People rose up quietly and walked away whenever he appeared. After a time therefore he remained at home. His wife, with her calm, firm demeanour and resolute will, exercised a remarkable power over him, and he followed her about like a child. It must however have cost her a great deal of trouble to keep him so constantly at home, for as soon as it was evening, he was seized with the desire to leave the house and ramble about for two or three hours; and people say," continued the professor smiling, "though I will not vouch for the truth of it, that she never allows him to have shoes that he can keep on his feet, excepting on a Friday evening, when he is allowed to go out for a few hours."

"That is true," exclaimed I, "for Mr. Stieglitz always goes about in slippers; I have never seen him in anything else."

I spent a very pleasant evening with my relatives and left their kind little circle sufficiently early to reach the door of my employer by eight o'clock. Emma accompanied me to the foot of their hill, gave me her hand at parting, begging of me to do my very best to deserve another such indulgence before long.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Mr. Specht.

I HAVE not as yet said much about our excellent bookkeeper, excellent in the estimation of Mrs. Stieglitz, and as a man of business incomparable in general opinion. He was in fact, the very soul of the business, and as exact in every respect as the principal herself, although the mode in which he expressed his satisfaction or displeasure was different to hers. She, on the discovery of any fault or negligence, looked extremely grave and said, "eh! eh!" with that peculiar manner which indicated that on any repetition of the same error or negligence we might expect a very serious lecture. He, on the contrary, never gave way to strong language, but his manner was solemn, and his reproofs verbose and sanctimonious.

As to Mamsell Therese he appeared never to be satisfied with her.

She was a good-natured person, from a village in the neighbourhood, and had rather countrified manners. She was not to say handsome, but her figure was fine, and being physically strong, she handled the heaviest goods with the greatest ease and a certain degree of grace.

Mr. Specht spoke much of conversion, of the influence of Divine grace on the life and character; but according to his estimate this ineffable gift was not in her keeping. Not even the most earnest of his speeches had any effect on her unless by calling forth a scornful or derisive smile. If, on the contrary, Mrs. Stieglitz

found fault she would that very moment use her utmost endeavour to amend, and in every way fall in with her wishes.

It was soon apparent to me that her greatest delight was to tease the bookkeeper, and as I, in the secret of my soul disliked this smooth-tongued insinuating man. I was amused by the tricks which she played him. If for instance there were no customers in the shop, she would raise a heavy piece of goods as if to place it on its shelf, and then suddenly drop it on the counter right under his nose, with a noise that shook the place and made him start in terror.

"Good gracious!" he would say, "will you never learn to do things gently, and subdue that unbroken nature of yours! There is nothing gentle, nothing agreeable or exemplary in you!"

"But I do not wish to be agreeable, and that you know very well, Mr. Specht," she would reply with a contemptuous smile. On this I should see that peculiar expression in his eye, which was so repulsive to me, and turning up his eyes he would murmur, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive." She however would spring away laughing and say,

"Oh I have forgiven you, Mr. Specht, a long time ago!"

His hand would probably seize the yard measure which lay on the counter, with a convulsive grasp — then he would quietly put it into its proper place.

There prevailed a peculiar relationship between the two, which certainly was not of an amicable character, and such scenes as I have above described are of no unfrequent occurrence. One evening, however, something which I witnessed greatly astonished

me. I have already mentioned a sitting-room appropriated to our use which lay between my bed-room and that of Mr. Specht. It was not often used by us, unless we had some private writing to do, or wished to read or for any other reason to be alone, because we were allowed to remain in the comfortable, well-warmed dining-room, till ten or half-past ten, where we were at liberty to read or otherwise employ ourselves by the lamp-light. Nevertheless this sitting-room remained for our own use and though it was frequently without fire, I sometimes came into it preferring to be alone there either for reading or writing.

Another reason why I liked to be in my chamber during the evening was perhaps the following; somewhat childish though it be. Our house was opposite to the principal inn of the town. My window gave me a perfect view of all the life and comings and goings on there, and I could amuse myself for hours simply by watching what went forward. When the whole place was lighted in the evening, I became the witness of little bits of life which, greatly interesting my imagination, had for me a peculiar enjoyment.

The partition between our suite of rooms was slight, and a door opened from my chamber into the sitting-room, though it was always kept locked, such, for some reason, being the order of the house. On the evening, therefore, in question I went into my chamber intending to fetch thence a book which I needed, for I was then sitting below, when to my surprise I perceived that the bookkeeper and Mamsell Therese were together in the sitting-room engaged in deep conversation. He was speaking on his favourite subject, that of "the heavenly

spark which dwells in every human breast and which needs only to be fanned by a willing spirit, to burst forth into a God-pleasing flame." How often had I heard him ring the changes on this one idea; nevertheless I was surprised to hear him talking thus to his unfriendly shop-companion,

"Let this divine fire," he said, "soften the rough encasement of your nature, and kindle the pure light of christian good-will in your heart."

I could not but hear every word that was spoken. In reply she laughed as if greatly amused, and he continued with increasing earnestness,

"Your nature is cold, because it is dark; because it is unpenetrated, as yet, by the sunlight of grace and christian love. Let me lead you into the path of christian love. There all is light and warm; there is the rock-shadow in the weary land; there is the green pasture by the still water; the rest for the weary pilgrim; the sweet converse by the way!"

Again she laughed; then said, "Have done with all this talk Mr. Specht! I don't understand you. I've told you so before. I've no faith in you saints! You make me feel afraid!"

"This fear," replied he, "is a good sign. It is the evil within you which is shaken; the foundations of your unbelief are giving way. Open now the windows of your heart and let the morning light come in!"

She was silent.

"There,se," said he, "let us pray together! for, my sister, if we become kindred in our spiritual life; — if we are one in our faith in God — then we shall mutually lighten the burden and weariness of the day's duty."

I grew impatient, coughed, and the next moment went into the room:

"Pardon me, Mamsell Therese," said the book-keeper in quite a different tone, "my lamp is gone out, allow me to light it at yours."

"I am going myself," said she, and wishing us both good-night left the room.

It was still early, and as the fire was out and the room cold I returned to my own chamber, intending to read there. Here Mr. Specht followed me; he was extremely friendly and talkative.

"Good, very good," said he, "to spend your leisure time in improving yourself; but instead of giving your mind to light reading, you should devote it to religious study. Read the scriptures daily, for they are the words of eternal life. Ah, I don't see the Bible here; come into my room which is far more comfortable than yours. The fire is out in the sitting-room, but my own is warm, for I cannot do without fire. Fire, my young friend, even the outward element, is symbolical of the Divine love which is life."

If his conversation with Mamsell Therese had appeared strange to me, no less strange did his general manner now appear: his eyes glimmered, and his usually pale countenance was flushed and lit up as by an underlying merriment. I followed him to his room, and the first thing that struck me there was a strong punch atmosphere; indeed a stout glass of this exhilarating beverage stood on the table. This was the first time I had been in Mr. Specht's chamber. It was much better furnished than mine, and had a sofa as well as a stove, the comfortable warmth of which I

could not but acknowledge, for it was now the end of November and the evenings were extremely cold.

A large handsome bible lay on the table, in close companionship with the glass of punch. Mr. Specht laid his hand on the former, and looking at me, said, "This is the great treasure." He drew a chair forward for me near the stove, bade me be seated and was evidently in a very social mood. Without any request on my part, he introduced the subject of his own life, various passages out of which he related, whence I soon perceived that he liked to dwell on that portion of it which he had passed as a traveller for the house of "Stieglitz and Comp." in Amsterdam.

"Yes, my friend," he said, "a great business is, and ever will be a great business, and nothing but the fact of my being here in the possession of the *procura* and my being as it were, the general manager, could compensate to me for having to give up my beautiful journeys. Besides there always comes a time when one prefers a quiet, contemplative life to the active bustle of the world, and I have lived a life of hustle and pleasure, yes, my dear fellow, I travelled for the house of "Stieglitz and Comp." in Indigo, in blue Indigo; I travelled with a pair of horses, quite in grand style; and had a coachman. Our house was very well known; I needed only to say, 'My name is Specht, of the firm of Stieglitz and Comp.' and my order-book was filled directly. Ah, my young friend, that was a life!"

He lifted his glass from the table, took a good draught, and invited me to do the same. I did not make much objection and found it to be excellent ch.

"Although I am very strict, in my usual life," con-

tinued the book-keeper, and abominate as a rule all spirituous liquors, yet there are times when my mind is depressed, weighed down as if with lead, and then a little stimulant is necessary. Man is a weak creature, and that which we call the body, must every now and then be spurred up, that it may recover itself and not resist the lark-like impulse of the soul which struggles to be freed from its captivity and ascend to heaven."

To me it seemed as if Mr. Specht had spurred himself considerably; a wonderfully jubilant soul seemed to look forth from his excited eyes, and he went on to speak in a phraseology which seemed to me very peculiar and almost unintelligible. Still I did not reject his ideas, but in answer to his urgent beseechings promised to do my utmost, so that the light which was within me might, instead of being smothered by the ashes of sin, burst forth into clear flame.

My willingness to be guided touched the heart of Mr. Specht, and as we both had drunk a good deal, he was perfectly happy and thanked God that he was enabled to lead a soul into the right way. He talked more than I thought wise, and at length I ceased to find much meaning in what he said. I rose up, therefore, and begging him to excuse me, returned to my own room and went to bed; but it was some time before I could sleep. The following morning I was, for the first time, late in getting up, which cost me a severe look from Mrs. Stieglitz.

In general, however, I was fortunate enough to give entire satisfaction to this my earnest and most estimable employer. She allowed me regularly to visit my relations, and the occasional notes that I conveyed from her to the professor brightened his countenance

and gave me a still more cordial reception from his wife and little Emma. When I say *little* Emma, it must not be understood as being applicable to her exterior, for she, although only fourteen, was tall of her age, and when we, as was our habit every now and then, measured our heights by a line made on the wall, she always maintained that I had not measured fairly, and that I was at least half an inch shorter than she.

I was at that time sixteen, and was beginning to shoot up amazingly. It was very agreeable to me that I was from week to week observably taller, but on the other hand it was a great trouble and perplexity that my clothes, instead of growing at the same time, faithlessly remained as they were, without increase, either of length or breadth. My guardian had given me clearly to understand that I must not look to him for any money for clothes during the next twelvemonths; and if my grandmother had not, in answer to my urgent request, sent me the means of buying an overcoat I must have suffered bitterly from the cold, as the early winter set in. In order to make my one pair of trowsers long enough for my lengthening legs, I was obliged to strap them tightly down under my boots, and to let down my bracers to the utmost; and even then the buttons were being continually torn off, thus furnishing me, many an evening with the job of sewing them on again.

But as every thing in the world has its limits, so of course, must it be with the extensibility of worn-out trowsers. Accordingly, one day, when mounted on a step ladder, I was lifting a heavy piece of goods into its accustomed place, I felt all at once my trowsers giving way at the knee; and came down with a great

split in the left leg, which sent me to my room in a state of desperation. Full of the deepest concern I began to consider what now was to be done; for as to repairing the damage, that was impossible, at all events in a short time.

However assiduously I might search through my wardrobe, which hung on the wall behind a curtain; I could not find any thing to wear in place of these, excepting a pair of old grey summer trowsers. There was nothing else for it; therefore, casting a melancholy glance at the frostwork on the window-panes, I put these on, and suffered much more, as I went down-stairs again, from my sense of poverty than even from the cold.

Mr. Specht shook his head when he saw me, Mamsell Therese smiled, but Mrs. Stieglitz beckoned me into the dining-room.

"You must not feel hurt," said she very gravely, "but you must not be seen in the shop dressed in that way!"

I was silent.

"Ay, ay!" continued she, "how can one be so forgetful — or," said she, hesitating, and looking at me with a good-tempered glance, which changed into one of the most cordial kindness as she observed that my eyes had filled with tears — "or perhaps your wardrobe is not well supplied?"

I nodded an assent, and added, somewhat tremulously, that my guardian had refused to supply me with fresh clothes for twelvemonths, and that I had not any means of getting new ones. "I am very sorry to be such a figure," I added, "but indeed I cannot help it."

"Hm, hm," said my mistress, "but that won't do; I'll see about it. Look you, my friend, I have noticed with pleasure that you keep your clothes well brushed and clean, but independently of that, it did not escape my notice that they were not exactly such as you ought to have. But, it is a delicate point with me; and when people say that Mrs. Stieglitz is a stern, ill-tempered woman, who has no feeling for others, that is not true; I am stern and hard to worthless people; but when any one will conduct themselves well, as you have done up to the present time, I will do all I can for them with great pleasure. You can now," continued she, "remain for a few days out of the shop, and begin to get the new ledger in order. In the meantime we will have all that you require made for you."

"But," returned I, deeply touched by the kindness of this excellent woman, "I don't know whether my guardian —

"What about your guardian?" interrupted she, fixing her eyes sternly on me. "Do what I tell you and don't be wilful. I don't know that I am going to give you any thing, therefore you can make your mind easy. There will come a time by-and-by when I shall have a reckoning with you. Now bundle up your wardrobe and your linen, and I'll have a look at them. Spite of your being such a great, big man, you're still like a little child; you should have been more candid with me, and not have had any false shame. Now off with you and fetch down your things!"

I went up-stairs and could not exactly tell whether I felt this circumstance to be pleasant or otherwise.

In so far as the interest which my mistress took in me was a proof of her being satisfied, I was pleased, but on the other hand I did not like being treated as a child. After all, however, I was glad that my embarrassments, which were becoming greater every day, were in this way to be ended. — And had not she, the great head of the house, given me at the same time a proof of her confidence, by placing the new ledger in my hands?

I laid my wardrobe on the table, and truly it did not take up much room, and after I had fulfilled my duty, by the display of my poverty, I went into the counting-house, opened the important new ledger, carefully numbered the pages, entered Dr. and Cr., together with the names of the customers, in my most excellent calligraphic style, on the thick, white paper, and felt as if I really had taken a great rise in my position.

Mr. Stieglitz congratulated me on my success. Mr. Specht whispered to me, "Go on, young man, as you are beginning, only do not forget in your outward development that the inward is far more important."

After dinner the tailor came and a general measurement was taken of my exterior man.

Ever since the evening which I spent with Mr. Specht in his room he had been unusually patronising to me; had given me all possible instruction and assistance in my bookkeeping, and had even one day taken me into the weighing-room, and showed me how the loom was set for the weaving of silks. He had also become remarkably friendly with his former adversary, Miss Therese; and in fact it really seemed to me as if they two, according to what he had said to her that

evening, had agreed mutually to assist each other in bearing the burden and cares of the day.

For myself, I never entered the bookkeeper's chamber excepting by his own special invitation; he preferred it to the common sitting-room, and there I now and then drank a glass of excellent punch with him. He took great interest all this time in my spiritual enlightenment and growth; filled my head with mystical motions, and awoke such an anxiety in my soul on account of the wiles of the evil one, who as a roaring lion was seeking to devour me, that in my inexperience and real desire to do right I sought his advice and availed myself of the means he placed in my hands. These were principally the reading of strange mystical books, which were vague yet seductive at the same time.

He was also much given to expounding of scripture; but here again, though the language was greatly scriptural, yet the meaning was veiled and obscure, so that the mind of the hearer wandered as it were in dark uncertainty, desirous to catch at some truth of which it now and then perceived a mysteriously attractive gleam.

But without recalling any of these insidious teachings, it is enough to say that they darkened and confused my mind; and that I, who had begun by honestly desiring to love God with all my heart and soul and strength, and who with a child-like faith and simplicity read the gospel of our Lord and found nothing beyond my comprehension, was now lost in such a maze of dazzling and bewildering obscurity that nothing was left but to grasp the hand of my teacher and follow him as he led.

One day, for instance, happening to say that the God whom I loved and worshipped was an ideal — not as He is pictured outwardly, a grave and often angry old man seated on a throne of clouds — Mr. Specht smiled, and in reply bade me read a chapter in the Bible.

The book opened at the song of Solomon — I believe it had a knack of doing so. He desired me to read the first passages upon which my eye fell, for that all were good and full of instruction.

He leant back in his chair, closed his eyes, and I read, not continuously, but a passage here and there.

I then closed the book and turned to my teacher with an inquiry which had naturally suggested itself, otherwise the whole was dubious to me.

"Did king Solomon," asked I, "mean by the love of which he speaks for his 'sister and his spouse' that which he felt for God and the church?"

"Unquestionably," replied Specht; "but you must read this wonderful song through, and read it often to comprehend the deep meaning of its beautiful and glowing strophes."

I did as he desired me, and though at first I might be a dull scholar yet the light that he spoke of dawned upon me in time.

I came to relish his teachings, and followed them faithfully through the labyrinths into which they led.

CHAPTER XXIX.

The Image of my Devotion.

I WAS now, thanks to the kindness of my mistress, completely refitted with the best of everything and able to present myself anywhere. The whole table was covered with my clothes on the day when the tailor and the seamstress brought them home; and when I had expressed my thanks to Mrs. Stieglitz, I could not help saying, that I really should be half frightened when the time came for me to see the bill.

"Don't think about that," replied she, in her grave, determined manner. "Be more industrious than ever, and never forget the day on which I committed the ledger to your keeping."

So passed the winter; spring came; then summer and autumn, and I could with pride, acknowledge that I had gained a great deal of useful information in the past year.

Mr. Stieglitz had during this time become still more grave and morose, nor of late had he spent more than an hour each morning in the counting-house, taken his dinner with us, and then disappeared for the remainder of the day.

I was very assiduous in visiting my relations, and spent all my free time in their society. The professor was as friendly and as kind to me, as his somewhat stern character was capable of being; his wife treated me like a son. As for little Emma she had wonderfully changed in the past year. As the song says,

She was a child, a few days since
But is a child no longer.

She had blossomed out of the child into the maiden without anybody having noticed it. As a child her manners had been calm, and her mind early developed; neither had she been of a naturally merry temperament, so that she remained apparently the same as ever. But she was beautiful, and this every one confessed. Her large, clear eyes had in particular, a deeper, softer, more inward expression, and were more in harmony with the rest of her features. Formerly her eyes, seemed too dominant, now they formed only a charming portion of the whole sweet countenance. Her mother used to say "Emma has dove's-eyes," and this expression it was which first kindled the spark in my inner being.

"Behold thou art fair, my love; behold thou art fair; thou hast dove's eyes."

I was absent in mind the whole of that evening; and from out of the strange things and images with which the bookkeeper had filled my head, a bright star seemed to blaze forth, and I believed that I must have found the image, the image in the soul, of which the bookkeeper was always speaking, around which all my holy and good thoughts should gather. An inexplicable timidity however kept me from making this confession to him. I locked up this image in the innermost of my heart and determined to keep it a secret from all eyes.

I had all the less desire to speak of my cousin Emma to the bookkeeper, because he had several times expressed the wish to make the acquaintance of the professor and his family, and just now he was more urgent on this subject than before; so urgent in-

deed that I at length promised to mention his wish to my cousin.

I kept my word therefore; and my relatives, who thought it might be of service to me, gave me leave to bring him on my next visit. We went there accordingly, the following week. The professor was grave and measured in his manners; his wife, polite, as she always was, and Emma and I occupied ourselves with each other, as usual.

"What a happy fellow you are!" said Mr. Specht on our way home. "I must confess that it is a long time since I have seen such a lovely girl as your cousin Emma."

From this time Mr. Specht made frequent visits, sometimes with and sometimes without me to the house of my relations, the only satisfactory result of which was, as far as I was concerned, that he was increasingly kind and considerate towards me at home.

But now to speak honestly of myself, I must confess that I was no longer the innocent happy being that I was formerly. I no longer looked round the world with a full, open-hearted gaze, and no longer regarded all that met my eye with pleased satisfaction. Whilst I was yet innocent there lay an eternal sunshine on all my days, and my eye wandered only as it were over pleasant, and friendly distances, which the unknown future of my life would discover. I regarded the whole world and everybody as good, and if here and there, wicked people did exist, I thought they were only the exceptions.

The lessons of Mr. Specht had, however, taught me something different. I saw, thick, dark mist ascending, where till then I had discovered nothing but sunlighted

valleys, and heard nothing but the pious ringing of church-bells. He taught me to suspect the good in man, and brought forward in endless variations, his favourite doctrine,

The sayings and doings of man are evil from his youth upwards.

According to his creed the number of the wicked greatly predominated; that of the good was small; and when he held up a mirror before my own proper self, I was obliged to confess, that though I was conscious of no great sins, I still stood far below even the moderately good.

As regarded himself, he, according to his own account was one of the elect; Divine Grace had come forth into living operation in his heart.

But again I say, I will not go into his teachings. I was in the fairest way possible of becoming a regular devotee. Yet I must again repeat, as a warning to others, that the books he gave me to read and my daily study of the unintelligible portions of the Old Testament, brought my mind into great darkness which was at the same time both terrible and fascinating.

Of all sin the desecration of the holy is the most hateful to God. His sin was of that kind, and he was dragging down my soul also. Still I was no hypocrite, and in honesty of heart I wished to speak of my religious desires and aspirations to my relatives. But the professor always cut me short by remarking, that whilst it was praiseworthy to love and fear God, yet it was better not to talk much on the subject — in fact it was absurd in a youth of my age.

"You attend morning and evening service on Sundays," he would say, "and I dare say go with your

Mr. Specht to week-day prayer-meetings. — All very good, only don't talk of it. Religion ought to be the life, as it were, of our daily life, not a matter of outward show."

Sometimes I tried to introduce the subject when I was alone with Emma, deploring our natural depravity, and repeating to her the arguments of my teacher.

"Now listen, cousin," she would reply, "we are not so wicked, either you or I, as you talk of — or, what is it so sinful that you are doing? I cannot tell. You are assiduous in your business. Mrs. Stieglitz is satisfied with you, and she is an excellent woman. Besides, it is a great deal more natural, and I believe more in accordance with God's will, that young people should be cheerful, as you used to be, and really to enjoy your life. I hardly seem to know you now-a-days, you are so greatly changed; and I wish, with all my heart, that your Doctor Burbus of whom you used to talk so much, would come and set you all right. — Why need you trouble yourself about being so wicked? Leave all that to Mr. Specht. He may have good reason for it."

These and similar remonstrances from this sensible girl, whom I unconsciously loved, caused a great reaction in my soul; they opened a window in my heart and let in the clear sunshine, which did me a great deal of good.

I told the bookkeeper of my conversations with Emma and of her view of the subject.

"All right," said he, "go on. Lose no opportunity of religious discourse with her, and she herself will in time begin to yearn after the work of grace in her heart."

I did not hear much from my family during this time. My grandmother wrote to me occasionally, and every letter from her contained a postscript from my friend Miss Schmied, who still continued her anxious love for me, and who evidently had wept while she wrote, the paper being blotted with tears. From Doctor Burbus I had not heard a single word — nor yet did they appear to know anything of him at Königsbronn mill. What had become of my friend?

I received, however, a long letter one day from my guardian, in which he expressed his satisfaction that I had at length come to my senses and shown myself capable of learning something useful by which I might get on in the world.

"Your mistress," he wrote, "speaks extremely well of you, and even gives me the agreeable hope that from the aptness you shew in business and your general ability, she may be able to give you a moderate salary during the last years of your apprenticeship. I am grateful to you for having at last followed my advice, and am perfectly satisfied with your conduct so far. On the other hand, I am sorry to tell you, that your cousin writes me something about you which I cannot at all approve, and which causes me deep concern. You are, your cousin tells me, wholly in the hands of a certain Mr. Specht, your bookkeeper, and are in a fair way of becoming a fanatical hypocrite. Yes, a hypocrite, my friend, and nothing short of it. I know these talking religionists very well, and I can tell you that their religion is often only a cloke for their sins. Now, I warn you against this Mr. Specht, who, though I have never seen him, is, I will venture to say, a bad man, who has some private design against you. I warn

you, therefore, to keep a strict watch over your actions, and do nothing which the conscience of an honest man — not the conscience of a talking hypocrite — cannot fully approve.

"Apropos, I had almost forgotten to tell you that your former master, Mr. Reissmehl is dead. Mr. Philip carries on the business on his own account and is now the father of a son."

This letter made a deep impression on me: I read it again and again. If my guardian was right the case was serious. But what designs could Specht have upon me? True, there were many things in his conduct which had long appeared enigmatical to me. For instance, I knew that he wrote many letters in his own private room to distant trading-houses, especially to our own firm in Amsterdam; he himself took copies of these letters, and latterly he had at various times given them to me to post, having in the first case, desired me not to speak of them to any one; he also received many letters addressed to his own name, and these I was instructed, carefully to abstract from the letters of the firm and give to him privately, for it was my duty to fetch daily our correspondence from the post-office.

One day also I saw an open letter lying on his table which was an acknowledgment from an acquaintance of his, of a considerable remittance which he had made him. Still there was nothing really suspicious in all this when I considered that he was the financier of the firm, and it was very possible that there might be private transactions which with the knowledge of the head of the firm did not appear in the usual business of the counting-house.

One evening a circumstance occurred which I thought nothing of at the time, but which afterwards proved of momentous importance. It was thus. The bookkeeper and I were together. Many papers were lying on the table, amongst others a letter written by Mrs. Stieglitz, which he took up, and after looking at the signature for a moment he said:

"What a peculiar hand our Mrs. Stieglitz writes, half a man's and half a woman's! And yet, do you know, I've often thought there was a great resemblance between your hand and hers! Now just see for curiosity whether you could not write exactly like her."

I took up my pen, and after some little practice scrawled her signature so exactly that it would have been difficult not to have supposed it genuine.

"Well, that's very wonderful! — Yet it's a dangerous faculty my young friend, I can tell you," said he.

I thought nothing more on the subject, the loose papers on which I had been practising were put altogether into his blotting-book, and we talked of something else.

I was for some time undecided as to what I had better do with regard to my guardian's letter. Sometimes I thought I ought to show it to Mrs. Stieglitz; then that I would mention it to Mr. Specht himself, and finally I decided on so doing.

He took it exceedingly well; said it was impossible for people of the world to understand the children of grace; — that persecution and misrepresentation were their constant experience and declared, that whilst he thanked me for my candour, he freely forgave all his enemies and would seek only to do them good. One thing

however, he insisted upon, that I should be less confidential with my relatives for the future.

I was won by his manner, and when he invited me to accompany him on the following Friday evening to meeting, I thanked him with a sincere belief in his honesty and a determination to stand by him against those who, as I supposed, having less religious experience than himself, were incapable of forming a correct judgment of his character.

CHAPTER XXX.

The Prayer-meeting.

IN a distant part of the town, and close upon the river which flows through that quarter, stood a small house from which the passer-by frequently heard, especially on Friday evenings, the sound of the singing of hymns. This house belonged to a dyer who, however, had given up his business, perhaps because being one of the fanatical brethren who was much given to seeing visions, his outward eye was so darkened by their brilliancy and splendour, that he was no longer able to distinguish earthly colours. He opened therefore a small wine-tavern, which was tolerably well frequented because he kept wine of a good quality. The world said that he was one of his own best customers, and that his visions originated in a state of incipient intoxication. Be that as it might, he was looked up to by his brethren in the faith who rented the upper story of his house, consisting of two large rooms, as a place of religious instruction and prayer on the Friday evening.

As has been already said, the dyer, in order to

attract a higher class of customers, supplied his house with excellent and expensive wine. His customers consisted for the most part of elderly tradesmen, head-clerks, commercial travellers, and young government officials; yet still the number of guests was always small, because no one was allowed to frequent the house who was not introduced by an old customer. The entrance to the tavern from the street was by a dark passage; the conventicle, if I may so call it, was reached by an outside staircase which led up from the riverside into a small balcony, into which these rooms opened. The understanding with the dyer was, that as regarded the evening-worship, there must be no riotous drinking in his house at that time; but as it was out of reason to suppose that he would shut his house against his customers, he was induced to appropriate to the use of his old and established supporters a small room facing the river, and the window of which opened directly under the staircase which led to the balcony.

It was about seven o'clock, when we came into this hitherto to me unknown part of the town; and it was already dusk as we mounted the wooden stairs and stood in the balcony below which the dark river flowed on with a melancholy sound.

A most inconceivable depression was on my mind, and my heart beat audibly, as we entered the large room which was already nearly full of people seated in rows on simple stools and benches; men of all ages, and both young and aged women. As I had very few acquaintance in the town, I looked round in vain to find any of them there, in fact, the only person I knew, besides the bookkeeper, was a shoemaker, who instantly recognising me, gave me a look of kindly

satisfaction. We sat down, I by the side of Mr. Specht. Hymn-books were given us, and at a given sign the whole assembly began to sing.

It was a long hymn and sung with the deepest devotion; some leaning over their books, others looking up, as if inspired. I felt out of my place; the exaggerated devotion of those around created in me a reaction. I could not unite with, or feel myself at home in, this strange assembly; even the imagery of the hymn, though scriptural, was repulsive to my mind, and I felt that our old-fashioned church hymns were preferable.

When the last verse was sung, and I believe there were six-and-thirty, a deep silence fell over all, in the midst of which a young man dressed in black, tall and thin and pale, with streaming hair, and deep-set but flashing eyes rose, and pushing back with his thin hand, the long locks from his forehead, began to speak on the subject of the marriage-feast of the lamb, to which the hymn that had been sung was the prelude. It was an exciting picture of an approaching marriage; the shouting, the exultation of the coming guests, the innumerable company of the elect, who came up as the rushing of great waters and the rolling as of thunder. Then appeared the bride, the beautifully attired bride of the lamb, whose garments were described with a minuteness that was dazzling — silk and fine linen, and a "f" orphir, and pearls of the ocean; — and the of the gardens of Solomon. Then followed g down to the feast, and the casting-out of had no wedding-garment — and the outer and the gnashing of teeth into which he was — And again the wedding-feast and the exultation and the shouting for joy!

But this can only give the faintest idea of the pictured imagery and the dramatic effect of the sermon. For my part, I might have listened with interest and some admiration of the poetical language and the splendid though somewhat sensuous imagery made use of by the preacher, if I had not been really frightened by the effect which it produced upon the congregation. Old faces seemed kindled up as by a wild emotion of passion, women sighed and wept, some fainted and others fell into hysterical sobbing and crying. All was in a suppressed uproar of excitement, and I knew not what was coming next, when, starting up from my seat, I rushed for the door, determined to make my escape. I tumbled against one and another who were sitting in the way, and who, all absorbed by the words of the preacher, had neither seen me nor, of course, made way for me. I reached the door, however, then became aware that I was followed. Thinking that others also might be leaving the room as well as myself, I went forward into the balcony, but here, being suddenly seized from behind by a strong grasp, I made a violent effort to free myself, and looking round, saw the pale, distorted countenance of Mr. Specht.

"Where are you going?" he demanded.

"I'm going home!" I said; "Leave hold of me!"

"You must bring him back," said a voice behind him; "you must not let him escape."

I was frightened, probably far more than there was any occasion for; but this attempt to impede my voluntary action called forth a still more determined opposition. I struggled violently to free myself; the narrow balcony was crowded, and another strong hand was now

upon me. It was the shoemaker who had welcomed me on entering.

"He must come back," said he, addressing Specht and the others.

"He shall!" said Specht, "or I'll throw him into the river!"

Terror-stricken at this menace, I convulsively seized the balustrade of the balcony and shouted for help. The two men seemed undecided what to do next, when the casement of the room at the foot of the stair-case was suddenly opened, a man looked out, and seeing that some one was being held by force in the balcony, exclaimed:

"Let him go, you night-owls, or I'll hurl my knife into your hearts!"

I recognised to my relief and also to my extreme terror, the voice of my master, and forcing myself from my captors, sprang down the stairs into the street and then hurried away as fast as my legs would carry me.

CHAPTER XXXI.

A Star in a dark Night.

IN about ten minutes I had left behind me that remote quarter of the town, with its squalid and comparatively empty streets; now, therefore, perceiving that I was not pursued I slackened my pace, and felt a real consolation in finding myself in a respectable neighbourhood where people were actively yet quietly going to and fro. It might be about nine o'clock, but there was no immediate necessity for me to go

home. Nor did I feel inclined to do so, for my mind was not yet calm, and I did not wish just then to come face to face with Mrs. Stieglitz. I was exasperated against the bookkeeper, yet I could not bring any actual accusation against him; besides, I knew that one so plausible as he was, and who stood so high in the estimation of our principal, would justify himself, and so contrive that the disturbance and misconduct, if any there were, should fall back upon myself.

It was singular how completely my feeling towards this man, my former guide and confidant, had been changed in this short time. My eyes seemed suddenly to have opened, and I saw him as the fanatical hypocrite which he had been described to me, as a dangerous guide which I had been blindly following into a false path. I now felt great respect for the penetration of my guardian and my cousin Emma, as well as for her sarcastic father, who had warned me to beware of hypocrites who had honey on their lips and poison in their hearts.

And now it seemed suddenly to strike me that neither he nor his daughter had of late been as open-hearted and friendly with me as formerly. I felt depressed and agitated, and the idea of perhaps having forfeited their good will and esteem made me perfectly unhappy.

With my mind thus depressed I came up to the great post-house, and stood for a moment to see what was going on in the court. The next moment the diligence came up the street; the postilion blew his horn, and with a swinging motion it turned into the court; the steaming horses relaxed their pace and then drooped their heads; the passengers looked out of the windows

with impulsive gestures. And as the vehicle passed the diligence gate I saw every countenance distinctly.

The conductor leaps down from his seat, opens the coach-door and the long confined passengers descend, glad to have reached the end of their journey, or otherwise to be a little more at liberty.

It was, as may be remembered, one of my great pleasures to watch the arrival of the post-coach; to notice all the travellers, and to let my imagination indulge in all kind of fancies about them. How many wishes, hopes, expectations, were not contained in this small travelling space: and how differently the various passengers demeaned themselves according to these expectations and hopes.

Many people, for instance, are standing here this evening waiting for dear friends, and as the coach drives into the court, how they are tossed to and fro, as to whether the expected ones are there or not.

"He is not in the cabriolet," said an elderly lady, as the diligence turned into the court.

"I think he is, mama," replied a young girl, "for I saw a grey-travelling cap, and he had such a one when he was here last."

"Oh nonsense," said a third in the party, "he with the grey cap is a fat old gentleman."

"He will most likely be in the coach itself," suggested two little boys.

The whole party tripped into the court after the diligence. The mother inquired from the conductor about her son, but the conductor was busy with his ay-bill, shrugged his shoulders and had not time to tend to her.

The man in the grey travelling cap is a fat old

gentleman and not the expected one. He is furnished with every possible appliance for travelling: carries under his right arm an air-cushion and under his left a *couvre-pieds*; he smokes at the same time his cigar, and is in no hurry, for he is going forward in half an hour's time. He is a very polite gentleman, and hearing the inquiry of the lady, he says:

"There are yet coming, madame, two or three extra-chaises; perhaps the gentleman you are inquiring after may be in one of them."

"Oh there are extra-chaises!" say the little boys exultantly, and the hoping family still remains.

A couple of ladies have also alighted from the post-coach, each one carries a band-box in each hand; they set these four band-boxes on the ground and then, by the light of a lantern, draw forth from under the seats and elsewhere, no end of packages and travelling bags, parasols, umbrellas, cloaks, and shawls, and yet two or three more band-boxes. When all these things are out and placed together and their owners with them, one can hardly imagine how all these people and all these effects could be crammed into that little space.

Both ladies look expectantly round the court, and seem troubled that nobody is come to meet them. They are however no longer young and therefore accustomed to waiting.

"Goodness me!" says one of them, "I don't know a step of the way, and if nobody comes to meet us, whatever shall we do."

"I don't know, for the life of me," says the other.

A woman-servant is in the meantime walking about with a large lantern in her hand, which she raises to get a better view of the faces of the passengers, but

not finding what she is seeking for, she too patiently waits the arrival of the extra-chaises.

On this one of the old ladies with the many band-boxes, sighs and says:

"I really did hope that young woman was sent to meet us! What shall we do if they've forgotten us!"

The polite, fat old gentleman in the grey travelling cap again feels himself called upon to say something consolatory.

"Don't be uneasy, ladies," says he, "for the diligence is unusually early this evening. You could hardly be expected so soon."

Now the horses of the postilions of the extra-chaises are heard, and the crack of the whip sounds through the streets, which are now becoming silent; and all is again in movement in the yard. The lady and the young party station themselves near the gate to have the first glance of the first extra-chaise. Next comes up a carriage as large as the post-coach itself, and the two little boys are pushed aside by one of the post-officials, because in their extravagant demonstrations of joy, at sight of the expected uncle, they are about to rush under the horses' feet.

"Julius! Wilhelm!" cries the terrified mother, "do come here!"

"Uncle!" exclaims one of the girls; and the uncle shouts back out of coach,

"Good evening!"

The postilion swears and cracks his whip, the coachman's dog barks on the top, and the two old ladies are in distress, for in the bustle of this new arrival the pyramid of band-boxes is overthrown.

There is a universal confusion. The extra-chaise is

emptied of its contents; the uncle, after he has kissed all the family round, is carried off by them in triumph. Julius and Wilhelm trudge away with a large carpet-bag between them and a gigantic hat-box, which they think it the highest honour to be allowed to carry home for the beloved uncle.

Similar scenes repeat themselves in the inn-yard; here the most kindly welcome, there a very cool one. The servant with the huge lantern again inspects the arriving passengers and seems now about to leave the place.

Everybody has been met or have removed themselves excepting the old ladies, who stand almost in desperation amidst their effects.

"Had we not better ask the young woman with the lantern," said one, "whether she knows where our brother lives?"

It was a wise suggestion; they stopped her just as she was going away and mentioned their brother's name.

"Oh good gracious!" exclaimed the servant, "why, that's my master! The Herr Chancellor however is not well, therefore he sent me to meet you — only I didn't know you!"

What astonishment and delight now succeeded! The servant was laden with the properties of the two ladies, and looked like a pedestrian dealer in band-boxes; one of the ladies carried the lantern, and away they went — the long-looked-for found at last.

The inn-yard is now empty and silent; the carriage-lights and the stable-boys' lanterns have all disappeared; the window of the bureau has become dimmer, for all the lights are extinguished excepting one for

the use of the clerk who remains on duty; the old gentleman in the grey travelling cap lights another cigar, after taking some refreshment, and again mounts into the diligence, which is again ready to start. The postilion blows his bugle to the tune of "There's yet hope for Poland," the clock strikes the last hour, the conductor shouts, "forward," and the coach drives out into the night.

I stood again alone at my corner; and the perplexed anxiety and mental disturbance, which had for the moment left me, again returned. Nobody had arrived for me that night; and yet if I could only have seen a single well-known face, what a joy it would have been to me — my grandmother — or even my guardian, or poor old Miss Schmied; what a welcome I should have given them!

I turned away with a deep sigh, and walked slowly forward till I reached the large open well-lighted doorway of the hotel which was opposite our house. Here I stopped again to see what was going on. A waiter with a napkin on his arm and a candle in his hand was standing by a pile of luggage, whilst the head-waiter was giving out the numbers of the chambers which were appropriated to the different guests.

I was thunder-struck, for suddenly, like a star in a dark night, a voice caught my ear, a deep voice which said,

"Now my good fellow, get my things carried up at once; I've stayed quite long enough below stairs."

I rushed to the speaker, and as I exclaimed, "Doctor Burbus!" I must confess that my eyes were full of tears.

"By Jove!" exclaimed the doctor, for it was in-

deed he; "My dear friend! But where are you going, so late to-night? I am regularly glad to see you though. Come up-stairs with me!"

He took me by the arm and we were soon in his room. There, seizing me by the shoulders, he kissed me heartily, looked steadily at me and shook his head.

"Dearly beloved bookkeeper," said he after a pause, "hopeful, young silk-manufacturer-expectant, how goes it with you? I don't think you are looking very well; your countenance is pale and disturbed, and when I feel your pulse, it seems to indicate a considerable agitation of mind."

"Dear doctor," I said, speaking calmly, for now that I had found my old friend, it seemed as if a hundred-weight were taken from my soul, "things are going both well and ill with me."

"I must hear all about that presently," said he, "but have you supped?"

"No," I answered, on which he ordered an excellent little supper and we sat down together.

It did not require much wine to loosen my tongue; I told him therefore, in the first place, all that had occurred at the mill after his mysterious disappearance; then of my entering the house of "Messrs. Stieglitz and Comp.," and confided to him everything — my success in the business, the good-will shewn towards me by my principal; of the character of Mr. Specht and the influence he had acquired over me, of the occurrences of this evening and the total revulsion of feeling which they had occasioned in me.

The doctor, during my relation, had risen to his feet and walked up and down the room with his hands behind him, listening attentively.

"It is really a queer story," he said when I had finished. "There is something Reissmehlish about it, and that Mr. Specht is Phillip over again, only a great deal worse. We must consider what is to be done. I have a strong suspicion myself of the man's honesty towards his employers, and that is the worst part of it; because, if you were to tell Mrs. Stieglitz all you have noticed, you have really no proof against him, and as to the affair of to-night — it was nothing more than a fanatical meeting, and if he suspected that he should suffer by anything you might say to his detriment, he would lie through thick and thin to clear himself, and probably, as regards this evening, accuse you of having been seen by him at a disreputable drinking house, in a low part of the town, and that when he wanted to bring you home you escaped from him. Oh, I know this sort of people very well! But where, my good fellow, do you live?"

"Just across the street," said I, and drew the doctor to the window.

"Well, that's queerer still!" said Burbus. "Again, just opposite, as it was at Reissmehl's! That was a very melancholy time though!" said he, speaking with the deepest earnestness, "Thank God, that it is over and past! When you leave me this evening you must take the proper way through the door; no plank would reach across here."

I too was thrown back upon the remembrance of those past times. I thought of those nocturnal arial transits and now again this very day I was placed in a similar position, though under different circumstances. Just across the road stood the house of my employer; not a light in a single window; I was staying out

now beyond my time, and I wondered how I was to gain admittance.

Whilst I was thus pondering I saw a figure coming warily up the street, pause at our door, look round, walk on a few paces, and then come warily back again. It was the bookkeeper, who was evidently waiting for some one. I pointed him out to the doctor, who burst into one of his old peals of laughter.

"Eh, eh, son of darkness!" said he. "Don't you see, my friend, how uneasy his evil conscience makes him? He is afraid of himself and dare not go to rest; he has a true presentiment that you are not yet come back, and is waiting to have a word or two with you. He is more afraid of you, than you are of him; take my word for it, for I understand this kind of individual.

"I'll go across with you and then will make conditions with the ghost. But he shall wait our time, for I want yet to tell you how things have gone on with me."

I was naturally curious to know what the doctor had to tell relative to himself, and was just about to mention the good Sybil, when he took a letter from his pocket-book and desired me to read it. It was from the miller and was as follows:

"MY DEAR DOCTOR,

"My daughter Sybil has to-day laid before me the letter which she received from you a year ago; from which I learn, that you have completed your studies; passed a successful examination, and honourably taken your doctor's degree. At the same time she gave me the lines addressed to myself, by which you ask the

hand of my daughter in marriage. You know that I am a man of but few words, therefore I say: Yes and Amen! The mother also is satisfied, and we now look for you, that what farther is necessary may be said on the subject."

When I had read the above letter, I gave the doctor my hand, and taking up our glasses we drank together in hearty good-will.

"I have just come from the mill," said Burbus, cheerily, "and there it was that I first heard of your being here. The mother, Sybil, Elsbeth, Francis and Casper, all send a thousand greetings to you, only they are so sorry that you have never been to see them, nor yet have written. The father, however, told me to say, that he had heard with pleasure of your being industrious and steady, and of the satisfaction you gave to your employers, but at the same time," added he laughing, "that you had become a Spechtianer, which if true, he would prefer your not paying many visits at the mill."

This really troubled me, and the doctor had a good deal to do before he could console me. Then he went on to speak of himself.

"You may see," said he, "from the father's letter, how I spent my time after leaving the mill. I can assure you that I was industrious; I worked like a horse, and lived — you've no notion how I lived! My room opposite old Reissmehl's was magnificence itself in comparison with the room, which I was now, in my superfluity of poverty, obliged to be satisfied with. However it was all right. I graduated at the university of the capital, and supplying for an old colleague,

was able to practise and so make a good deal of money, sufficient in fact, as you now see, to make a respectable appearance, and more than that, to justify my taking upon myself household duties and responsibilities. My good Sybil is not a fine lady, and will be quite satisfied with what we have to begin upon."

I congratulated the doctor with all my heart that he had at length reached a safe harbour; and dear Sybil, how rejoiced I was in the prospect of her happiness! We emptied another glass to a happy future for them both, and then the doctor thought it was time that we should lay our uneasy ghost.

It was now tolerably late and the night dark. But Specht was still pacing slowly backwards and forwards before the house. We were advancing directly towards him — and I must confess that my conversation with the doctor had by no means increased my respect for him — when we heard, in the stillness of the night, the sound of unsteady shuffling feet along the pavement and became aware of a second figure that was also aiming, in a dubious sort of way, at the Stieglitzs' house.

This second I recognised to my dismay as no other than Mr. Stieglitz, and taking the doctor's arm I drew him back for a moment to the opposite pavement, which we were just leaving. The bookkeeper was now at the house-door, and Mr. Stieglitz, who instantly caught sight of the dark skulking figure, and supposing him to be a thief, sprang forward with such a bound, as I should not have supposed the old man capable of, and seized hold of him. Specht, astonished by this attack, and probably recognising his assailant, struck him off and was about to escape, when suddenly was heard a hoarse laugh, and a quick, dazzling flash was seen in

the gas-light, like falling lightning. The bookkeeper staggered, and exclaiming, "Christ in Heaven!" fell to the pavement. The hoarse laughter was repeated, and the Head of the Firm opening the door with his latch-key, we saw, for we were now on the scene of action, that the passage was still lighted, and that Mrs. Stieglitz was standing there with a candle in her hand.

"What's all this?" demanded she sternly, yet with a tremulous voice; as her husband with wild, distorted features rushed into the house, exclaiming "I have hurled my knife at a thief! He lies there!"

I saw at these words that the candle shook in the hand of the strong woman; yet agitated as she was, she rang the servants' bell and conducted her husband away to his own room.

In the meantime Doctor Burbus, who the moment he saw the bookkeeper fall, was at his side, had now raised him and carried him into the house. I sprang in after him, closed and secured the door, seeing that already two of the night-police were approaching. For myself I had no apprehension. The important service that my friend the doctor had been able to undertake, would not only make him welcome to the house but excuse my late return.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Sleep well!

The utmost alarm prevailed through the house. Stieglitz, horrified at the idea of her husband being even a thief, wrung her hands when she discovered that this supposed thief was no other than the

bookkeeper. She, usually so self-possessed, seemed now quite bewildered, and wept as any ordinary woman might have done.

The wounded man was carried into the small room near the door, that in which I had been first introduced to the Head of the Firm by my cousin the professor.

The porter was just hurrying away for the doctor, when I held him back saying that the gentleman who had carried in the bookkeeper was a medical man my friend, whom I had suddenly met with, which in fact was the reason why I was so late. Mrs. Stieglitz, more than satisfied, expressed herself as thankful. So, no doubt, she really was, as by this means the whole thing could be kept much quieter, than if it had been necessary to summon the district-medical-man, the old family-physician, in the middle of the night. In addition to which Doctor Burbus was so calm and cautious in his manners, that he at once won the confidence of Mrs. Stieglitz; fortunately also he was provided with everything he needed for the emergency, and as soon as Mamsell Therese, the porter, and other of the servants, who came crowding round in noisy terror, had been dismissed, he set about to attend to his patient. Mrs. Stieglitz also desired me to retire, but the doctor suggested that I could be useful; therefore I remained.

Mr. Specht was not dangerously wounded. The knife, though used by a skilful hand, had been thrown in the darkness, and thus had missed the heart, though it had inflicted a wound on the left side. He had fallen probably as much from terror and the agitated state of his mind, as from the blow itself. The wound was soon dressed, a composing powder administered,

and all was now done that was necessary. After this Doctor Burbus briefly told Mrs. Stieglitz all that was needful regarding his acquaintance with me and my family, of his intention of calling on me the following day, of our accidental meeting and his taking me to his hotel. He offered an apology for having kept me out beyond regular hours; but suggested that it was fortunate as by this means he had been able to render assistance. In conclusion he added, that she need have no anxiety as to him, a stranger, being cognizant of this matter; for that he was in the invariable practice of the great duty of the physician — discreet silence. The thing was a misfortune — an accident — and there was no need to publish it to the world.

Specht, who had been giving evidence of faintness, was about being supported to his room by the doctor and myself when we were startled by the door slowly opening and the entrance of Mr. Stieglitz in a rich oriental dressing-gown, a crimson fez on his head, a candle in one hand and a Turkish sabre in the other. I who was nearest the door and first caught sight of this extraordinary apparition, let go my hold on Specht, who sank back into the chair from which he had just risen. Mrs. Stieglitz supported herself by the table and seemed for the moment to have lost her presence of mind; indeed the pale, ghost-like countenance of my master glaring upon us with the fire of insanity in his eyes was enough to appal even her.

"It is my husband; it is Mr Stieglitz," said she, pressing Doctor Burbus in a scarcely audible whisper.

"Yes, madam," said the insane man, with a dignity such under other circumstances might have been imposing, "your lord who has slain a robber and mur-

derer at the door of your tent. The voice within me however says that the criminal has been admitted within my sacred walls, and though I would show the rites of hospitality to everyone, yet I will never permit the blood of the evildoer whom my arm has overthrown to defile my threshold. — Where is the dead?"

"My dear Sir, you are under a mistake," replied the doctor, advancing a step forward; "the supposed robber whom you attacked was your own bookkeeper, Mr. Specht, who was at that moment about to enter the house."

"Where is the dead man?" again demanded Mr. Stieglitz, without noticing the words of the doctor.

"I am not dead!" stammered forth Specht, slowly raising himself and looking as pale and ghostlike as the man he addressed; "I am only slightly wounded, my worthy principal!"

"Not dead!" returned the insane man laughing. "Avaunt, robber!"

"Oh, for Heaven's sake!" exclaimed Mrs. Stieglitz — seizing her husband's arm, "what do you mean? It is Mr. Specht — Don't you know him — our worthy, faithful bookkeeper!"

"Our faithful bookkeeper!" repeated he scornfully — "look you, my hand was never raised against a faithful servant, against an upright man; my knife is an intelligent weapon, which never was hurled against a human breast — and it has been hurled against many a one, my dear — unless that breast contained the heart of a villain, and this is such a one!"

The last words were uttered in a shrill tone of terrible defiance. The doctor on this went forward and

held him back, saying to the bookkeeper as he passed, "Go — out of his sight!"

Nothing more was needful. There was a second door to the room and by this he disappeared. All now hurried towards Mr. Stieglitz, prepared to subdue him by force, if necessary. But, subdued perhaps simply by the calmness of the doctor, he shewed no further violence, but glancing after the retreating bookkeeper, said:

"He escapes; but his fate will overtake him. I shall however see him no more."

So saying, he took the arm of Doctor Burbus, and turned to leave the room, followed by his wife.

He was now perfectly quiet. If the delusion had not left him, he, at all events, kept it under subjection. The doctor saw him to his chamber, prescribed a certain mode of treatment, and was requested by Mr. Stieglitz to remain with him over the night; to which he cheerfully consented.

As I have said before, it was sorrowful to see how much this usually calm and strong woman was now affected. She sat in the ante-room in an arm-chair with her head bowed, the picture of depression; but she said not a word.

The sick man was soon asleep, and then, by the doctor's desire I too went to bed.

On the following day the old family-doctor who had heard something of the affair from the apothecary who prepared the medicines for Burbus, called to know the particulars. No one saw him but Mrs. Stieglitz who simply spoke of her husband having had a fit in the street and of his having fortunately received the assistance of a physician who was staying at the hotel

and who had attended him through the night, and that now he would allow no one else to approach him. This was true, for the sick man's delusion still continuing, he styled Burbus his body-physician, Ibrahim Effendi.

"You know," said she, to the old medical friend, "the excitable state of my husband's mind. We must let him have his way."

The old physician, a most kind-hearted and wealthy man, who attended the best families in the town, and who was so great a snuff-taker that it was said he had his snuff-box in each of the several houses he frequented, was not particularly fond of being called up at night, neither, unlike many of his brethren, was he jealous of younger practitioners, therefore he was quite satisfied, even though a new comer had intruded into his old practice.

Not a word was said to him of the bookkeeper's accident; he stayed half an hour with the lady of the house, told her the news of the town, and so took his leave.

In the meantime the business of the shop and the weighing-room went on as usual, although Mr. Specht was absent. I did double duty, and was, of course, busy beyond all former experience. I sat till late into the night over the books. I carried in the entries from the day-book; answered letters; saw the various travellers and gave orders, as Mrs. Stieglitz desired; in short had the whole business in my hands. I also received the keys of his private drawer from Mr. Stieglitz himself, so that the important book which he called the Grand-Sultan's harem, was in my hands. Every

now and then, also, he sent for me to hear how things were going on; thus, from time to time I saw him.

Although the skilful treatment of Doctor Burbus brought him in great measure through the late attack, which was a temporary return of that insanity under which he had formerly suffered so long; yet his whole system was more than usually shaken, and his physical health began rapidly to decline. His countenance was greatly changed, and though no violent return of his malady recurred, his mind was impaired — he was oppressed by a deep melancholy, out of which he only roused himself to call for his page to read him passages from the Koran, or for his physician Ibrahim Effendi, on whose judgment he placed implicit reliance.

Burbus, who passed a portion of every day with him, had not in the meantime neglected the usual etiquette of the profession. He called on the old family doctor on the first day after the painful occurrence, and confirming the statement of Mrs. Stieglitz, described to him the patient's case and the mode of treatment he had adopted, requesting the opinion of the older and more experienced man. The old jovial-hearted doctor was not only flattered by this professional respect but delighted with the new comer, and happening just then to have a difficult operation before him took him with him and found him a most skilful and reliable practitioner. This was fortunate. He became at once a fast friend and introduced him to an excellent practice.

The bookkeeper was soon up and about again; and all the more quickly perhaps because he could not fail to remark that I was not only gaining influence and winning the favour of our principal day by day,

but that I was showing myself able, young as I was, to conduct the business without his help.

Mr. Stieglitz was, in the meantime, progressing towards the grave. His disorder, a rapid decline, prevented his ever again leaving his chamber. The name of the bookkeeper was never mentioned before him, and once only he himself spoke of him. This was on the last day of his life, when, with his mind perfectly restored, he had a long conversation with his wife. He now most touchingly besought of her not to bear his failings in angry remembrance, but to forgive all the trouble and anxiety he had caused her; at the same time he warned her to beware of the bookkeeper, whom he said he knew to be a hypocritical and untrustworthy man!

The dying words of her husband failed to make any strong impression on Mrs. Stieglitz, probably appearing to her merely the effect of his former prejudice. She gradually withdrew herself from the more active management and left the responsible charge entirely in the hands of Specht. I was now, therefore, employed solely on the inferior books and in the weighing-room. Nevertheless I had the satisfaction of receiving a small salary, which was all-sufficient for my own personal expenditure, and by the consent of Mrs. Stieglitz I had unrestricted permission to visit my relations. Not a word had passed between the bookkeeper and me respecting the Friday evening meeting, or the events which followed. In fact we stood together alone on business-ground. I did my duty and he — waited for his opportunity.

That I should introduce Dr. Burbus to my cousin's family, was a matter of course, and that he became an

intimate friend and finally their medical man was also the natural consequence. On the other hand it was also perhaps the natural consequence that he should lose his standing in our house. He did so; through the influence of the bookkeeper, from whom he received, in the name of Mrs. Stieglitz a very handsome honorarium for his attendance on her husband, with the almost insulting message that if his further services were required by the family he would be sent for. But this assuredly was not the intended message of Mrs. Stieglitz.

I was both mortified and angry. It was not, however, my place to interfere. The old family-physician, when he heard of it, emptied nearly half a box of snuff and swore that he would be hanged if he ever heard of such treatment before.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

In the Weighing-room.

THE weighing-room is to the manufactory that which the counting-house is to the shop; the heart of the business, into which all the living threads are gathered. To begin with the beginning. Here it is that the raw silk, which is purchased through a factor from the great silk-dealers, is stored; this is the warehouse in fact; here also the books are kept and patterns of every kind of raw silk. The dyer fetches hence the silk and the pattern of the required colour which it is to be dyed; and here also are brought in the pieces of woven silk by the weaver.

The name, "weighing-room," indicates that here,

every thing, raw silk or finished goods are carefully weighed, — indeed, it could not be otherwise with silk. The warper is the man who arranges the warp, and who, having received his duly weighed amount of material, must see that the prepared warp and the returned goods are exactly of the proper weight, when the necessary loss is deducted. The silk for the weft is also given out from the weighing-room to be wound on bobbins and so brought back.

This room has in general a pleasant appearance. You observe on the walls large racks where are placed thousands of reels on which the silk has been wound. Every conceivable colour may here be seen, and all arranged in the most perfect order, so as to give the finest variations of tint and shade. I do not believe that the painter is so observant of the delicate shades of colour as the silk-weaver. Here, for example, is black, which is a common term and conveys one simple idea, yet there will be perhaps a dozen blacks, blue-black, red-black, brown-black, and many others. So, too, is there a great difference in white, and according to the various purposes for which the material is intended, will there be, the white which is quite white, the yellowish, the bluish, or the reddish white.

Here are also placed side by side the arranged warps, wound upon rollers of beautiful, hard wood, each furnished with its clean, carefully written label, on which may be read, from whom the silk was bought, how much has been lost in the warping, who dyed it, and now by whom it has been set.

Here, too, is the vast store of raw silk arranged according to its kind. Raw silk is not alone such, but may be classed into a great variety of species, if I

may so express myself, from the coarse filet-silk to the finest Turin organzine. Not alone every country, but every town produces a different silk, so also a single cocoon, from the grey outer envelope to the innermost spinning which, like a cambric garment, encases the worm.

That a counter and large ledgers are not wanting in a weighing-room stands to reason, the same also of large folios in which thousands of patterns are pasted. In the centre of the room, also, stands a long table above which hangs a pair of beautiful brass scales of exquisite workmanship, and so finely balanced that they will indicate the smallest weight or difference of weight with the utmost accuracy.

Every manufacturer who in any degree regards order or neatness, prides himself on this apartment being light, cheerful and beautifully arranged, and generally the head of the business, or in great manufactories a confidential manager, has his seat there.

Here are the sharpest eyes and the most exact, nay, unmerciful clerks, who examine the goods which the weavers bring in. Great strictness and even severity is necessary, because the smallest neglect on the part of the silk-weaver may ruin a whole piece. The severity is often carried to such an extreme by many manufacturers — especially was it so formerly — that they will not overlook a fault or accident, just as if such things were impossible to themselves; by which means their work-people, even the most dexterous, cleanly and industrious, are often reduced to misery and driven to desperation. The slightest mistake in the warp, a point, no larger perhaps than a pin's head; an insignificant error in the design, the loss of an ounce

or two in the weight, which perhaps was made in giving it out; all are punished by great deductions, so that the poor weavers' wages are reduced almost to nothing. Besides this, the cruel and abominable custom prevails, especially in the smaller country towns, of compelling the poor people to take a part of their hardly earned wages in some of the necessities of life, coffee, sugar, soap, oil, and such like, instead of money; for which purpose the manufacturer himself keeps a general shop adjoining the weighing-room.

The introduction of this custom may have originated in a good intention, and the manufacturer who has a paternal solicitude about his people may by that means supply them with better and cheaper goods than they could obtain elsewhere; but it soon degenerates into mere selfish greed on the part of the employer. Now, however, this system is happily fast going out of practice, and no right-minded manufacturer will engage in such a traffic.

Let us now look into such a weighing-room.

It is eight o'clock in the morning; the weighing-room is open and before the door you see a number of weavers, who are all in a hurry. Several of them live in the town, others in the country and these have already walked some miles to be here in time. The head of the firm—I am not now speaking of ours—is a short, stout man with a red face and wearing spectacles. He has just come into the weighing-room, and the growling way in which he speaks his "good morning," and the violence with which he bangs down and opens the ledgers make known to the clerks and the apprentices that Mr. Pepper is in a very bad humour.

He turns over several pages of the ledger and the first outbreak of the storm begins.

"Block," says he to one of the apprentices, "can't you leave off your everlasting childishness? or do you think it is part of your business to be always dancing the scales up and down? Do, sir, find something else to do! And you, Brown, why can't you let the people in?"

This Brown is an old clerk, much older than the principal, with a long thin face, an aquiline nose and eyes as keen as those of a hawk, a thorough bird's face, with a retreating chin, and a reddish wig on his head. He gives a start at this address from his master, for he had just taken stealthily a pinch of snuff.

Block opened the door and the weavers entered, — first one who merely wanted some thrown silk for the web. Brown turned to his account and said in a falsetto voice, which was natural to him:

"There has not been sufficient given out. Mr Block has entered the silk."

"Block, again!" said the principal, "you are always making blunders! — yet an old hand, like you," said he, turning to the weaver, "ought to have known what quantity was wanted."

The old weaver received his silk and went forward into an adjoining room, which was one of those shops of which I have spoken. This adjunct-business was managed by Miss Pepper, the sister of the manufacturer, who laboured here in the sweat of her brow to get a little pin-money out of the weavers. A small metal tube ran along the walls of these two rooms, that is to say, from the desk of the master in the weighing-room to that of his sister in the shop. No

sooner therefore had the first weaver entered this last place of business than the lady sent an inquiry through the tube to her brother, as to what was owing to the man.

"About five thalers," was the answer.

"And three he already owes me," was replied back again, "therefore he can have nothing more."

The next minute the poor old man was seen coming back, looking very melancholy, with his bundle of silk in his hand.

"Mr. Pepper," said he, addressing the master, "it is true, I don't deny it, that I have already had three thalers' worth of goods; but God knows, I have not had anything more than was absolutely necessary."

The principal shrugged his shoulders and said coldly, "Finish what you are about and then you can have more."

"But Mr. Pepper," remonstrated he mildly, "I must live; I now only want for one thaler. I was compelled to take three thalers' worth."

The master fired up, "What do you mean by compelled?" said he, "don't speak in that way to me!"

"Well, but," replied the weaver, "I did take three thalers' worth; but now I want oil and flour, and you know I cannot go to another shop; I can't get credit."

"I can do nothing for you," returned the principal, "finish what you're about and then you can have your goods."

"And my money?" said the weaver now angry.

"Two-thirds in goods and one-third in money; that is the rule here, as you know!" said he coldly, and the weaver walked slowly away.

Another weaver was now standing before the table,

a small, respectable-looking man, with a very anxious countenance. He had finished and brought in a large piece of silk, and Mr. Pepper, who had greeted him much more kindly than the other, now left his desk and came forward to the table. "You've soon done it," said he, "you are very industrious!" and so saying he commenced to examine the work with Brown.

"I've worked several nights through at it," replied the weaver with a sigh, "my wife will never be better. I am obliged to be up with her of nights and so I may as well work."

"I don't approve of night-work," observed Pepper, who now, aided by the sharp eyes of his clerk, was slowly going over the piece ell by ell with the closest scrutiny, "I don't like it, Mr. Haase; it spoils good work; look here now, it's plain enough where the night-work begins;" and so saying he showed a little knot which Brown had discovered. "Yes, yes, here begins the night-work," replied he, "and here's another knot. It's bad work, Mr. Haase."

"Bad work!" repeated the weaver, "I never did bad work in my life, Mr. Pepper!"

"Look here then," spoke the falsetto of Brown, "here's an oil-spot, in Heaven's name, an oil-spot!"

"Yes, really an oil-spot!" exclaimed the master. "We shall have a good deal to take off for that!"

"Take off, Mr. Pepper!" spoke the weaver earnestly, "you can't really mean what you say. Here's nothing in the work that cannot be remedied. I too saw the oil-spot, but you know it can be taken out directly. Oh, Mr. Pepper, about that oil-spot! It was the night before last—it was such a dreadful night to me; my wife was in bed; I thought she'd die every

minute, and I was forced to go backwards and forwards from the loom to her bed, to give her something to moisten her mouth, or to lay her easier.

"All such interruptions as those are sure to spoil work," remarked Mr. Pepper, coldly.

"And besides that," continued the weaver calmly, "my little child is so ill — it could not sleep and in its restlessness the lamp was upset. It is but a little spot, sir, and can easily be got out; and you will have consideration this once. I am so badly in want of my money."

"I am sorry," said the master and went back to his ledger; "make a note of the necessary deductions, Brown," said he to his clerk — and then continued, "there's eight thalers six groschen coming to Haase — what do you take off Brown? — oh, two thalers six groschen to be taken off for bad work. There remain then six thalers due. Two-thirds of which he takes out in goods — and two thalers paid in cash."

Whilst this calculation was going forward a perfect agony of dismay passed over the weaver's face; so that the naturally kindly countenance grew dark and even threatening.

"Won't you then have pity on me, Mr. Pepper," he said, "you know how much good work I've done for you. You don't mean it — you don't mean to make all that deduction for a fault which, as I have said over and over again, is of no consequence, and which, God knows, I couldn't help! — But if you really will insist on taking off that two thalers and six groschen — I won't go to the court about it — only you must pay me my six thalers in cash, because, God knows, I cannot get from the shop what I want for my poor, sick

wife and child" — here he sighed — "because the things that they must have are not to be got here!"

The principal raised his head, and lifting his spectacles to his forehead, said coldly, "What is settled, is settled; two-thirds in goods, and one-third in cash. Here are two thalers; and such an industrious man as you, will soon make up the little loss. Brown, enter to Mr. Haase the rose-coloured warp, and you, Block, give him a white weft, No. 4."

The weaver seemed to contend with himself whilst these orders were being given; then he stepped forward towards his employer's desk and said calmly:

"Don't give yourself any trouble about the rose-coloured warp, Mr. Pepper. Close my account and pay me my six thalers. I shall not work here any longer."

The manufacturer looked up astonished, and Brown began to speak some pacifying words.

"Spare yourself the trouble of talking, Mr. Brown," said the weaver; "men can't be treated in this way. There'll soon come a time, Mr. Pepper," said he, turning to him, "when you won't have a good workman left in your employ."

Mr. Pepper had a momentary struggle with himself as to whether he should let his best workman leave for this trifle, but at that moment the voice of his sister spoke through the tube:

"Let the fellow go! He gets more money than anybody else, and he always runs down my goods; he said too the other day, that I gave light weight — the scoundrel!"

This decided it. The weaver, however, was obliged to leave three thalers until he had fetched from his house the wooden reels which belonged to the

manufactory, and which were not worth half a thaler. He left the room with an unspoken curse.

Such scenes followed in quick succession. Brown, with his hawk's eye, looked through all the silks, and nothing escaped him. The tongue of the balance kept an exactitude which was almost incredible; endless deductions were made for failing weight, or for the minutest faults; and the longer the list of deductions the better pleased was the master, and all the time messages were hissing backwards and forwards along the metal tube between the weighing-room and the shop.

Miss Pepper drove a brisk trade, and after the poor people had been screwed to the utmost in the weighing-room, they were subjected again to the same process in the shop. The goods, which were of inferior quality, were sold at the highest price, and often they were obliged to take that which they did not want.

So it went on; the spools clattered, the scales jingled; Brown spoke in falsetto, young Block made much more noise than there was any need for and Mr. Pepper announced through the tube to his sister the unfortunate victim who was jumping out of the frying-pan into the fire.

"Good day, Mrs. Müller," says Miss Pepper, to a weaver's wife who now enters, "my brother tells me that you have good three thalers. Take a chair," says she, very condescendingly and writes in her book; "you have now two thalers to lay out; what do you wish for, my good woman."

Mrs. Müller takes a paper from her pocket and Miss Pepper reads, "coffee and sugar, salt and pepper; lamp-cottons and oil; some woollen stuff for an under-

petticoat, some yarn for my husband's stockings, and calico for the children's shirts."

"The whole will come to one thaler four-and-twenty silvergroschen," Miss Pepper says after a little calculation.

The things are put together. "Now," says the lady, "what will you have to make up the other six silvergroschen? Do you like stock-fish? It is very good eating and wholesome; and don't you think you'd like to take your husband a little tobacco, say for two silvergroschen."

"My husband does not smoke," says the wife, "and I'd take the stockfish, only he can't bear the smell."

"Stockfish, makes two silvergroschen," says the manufacturer's sister, heedless of the customer's demur, "and if we say," continued she, proceeding at once to action, "two ells of pink-ribbon for your Sunday cap—it will be very becoming to you," added she with a smile; that makes five silvergroschen. And considering how far you've come, a drop of brandy and a bun, for the remaining groschen; which makes up the two thalers, square."

As quick as lighting all was done. Poor Mrs. Müller, who was not a combative character, submitted with a rebellious mind, the stockfish was added to the other things, the ribbon was cut off, and now there was nothing more to be done than to drink the drop of brandy, which had been poured from a bottle in which was a multitude of preserved flies, and to eat the stale bun.

She was all the worse for the brandy and when she got home she had to encounter a very painful family scene. The husband, who was a weakly man,

the consequence of his sedentary life, could not endure the smell of the stockfish, as the poor wife knew, and now, out of humour as he was, he flew into a passion because of the two yards of ribbon, which could do nobody any good and which had cost three silver-groschen.

But as even in this world the reward of the good or bad action is often very soon seen, so now we may have the satisfaction of seeing the same thing occur in this very weighing-room.

Young Block whispered something to Brown, who then, turning to the master, said, "Dyer Brand is outside."

"What does the fellow want?" said Pepper, "I've nothing to say to him."

"But I with you," said a deep voice, "and without any leave asked or given, the dyer stood in the room. He was a tall, powerful man; nothing but bone, muscle and sinew; just such a man as was fitted for a dyer. His countenance was of a brown hue, the effect of the fresh air and water in which he worked all day long, whilst a certain redness of the nose showed equally plainly that the dyer was not satisfied to use the pure element inwardly unmixed. His hands, which were excessively large and strong, were of many colours, the prevailing tints being black and violet. On entering the room, he took off his cap, but with evident unwillingness and now stood crushing it in his hands.

"What do you want!" asked Mr. Pepper. "We are now two people, you know. You'd better keep out of my way, for it embitters me to think of the beautiful black silk, which you Mr. Brand, set your eternal brand upon."

He almost smiled at his own little attempt at a joke; and Brown and young Block, laughed outright as in duty bound.

The dyer, however, did not seem in any humour to take a joke, though he too smiled grimly.

"All that business is settled," said he, in his deep, rough voice, "and there needs no more be said on that matter. The silk was burned; so you said before the court; and you mustn't forget that I had your orders to weight the silk in dying heavier than was possible; for that reason it was spoiled, as I told you beforehand it would be."

"And what do you want now?" demanded the manufacturer, "the thing's ended; the court allowed you the deduction for the damaged silk. You've been paid it; and there's an end."

"Not the end by a good deal," returned the dyer calmly, "there's a little error in the account. My lawyer and I have made that out, and here's the proof of it."

He laid a paper on the counter and the manufacturer said angrily as he opened it: "It is not possible. I make no mistakes."

"To your disadvantage certainly very seldom, but to the disadvantage of the poor folks that work for you — sometimes."

"Do you insult me, in my own weighing-room?" said Pepper, "Brown, Block, you are both witnesses!"

"Yes," continued the dyer, smiling, "this paper shews; but if it's more agreeable to you, I can take it before the court."

Mr. Pepper's hand shook as he held the paper and glanced it through. He turned over the pages of his

ledger with such violent hurry that the dust and the loose papers flew out. He then carefully compared the items on the dyer's paper with the ledger-entries, and added the whole up, again and again. He was quite pale when he saw that the dyer was right; and he drew his breath hardly. The dyer who watched all this with an amused countenance, had in the meantime drawn a chair to the table and sat down quietly.

"Which of you," demanded the head of the firm, with a voice almost inarticulate with rage, "made out this account? Not you, Mr. Brown, I hope?"

"No, sir," returned he, "I was at that time ill, as you may remember, and away for a few days — and I fancy that Mr. Block —

"You again Block!"

"Yes, sir, I made out the account," replied he coolly, and laid it before you for your signature. But there stands on the bill as usual, "all errors excepted."

"Mr. Block," replied the principal with dignity and closing the ledger with great violence; "I dismiss you from my service, sir, leave the place at once! I shall have some talk with your father."

The young man, looked at his master calmly for a moment. It did not seem as if this dismissal troubled him in the least. The dyer, however, said to him:

"I am sorry, Mr. Block, to have caused you any trouble. But you'll find plenty of better places."

The apprentice seemed perfectly satisfied; took his cap from the wall, knocked the dust out of it, and said, turning towards his late master with a bow,

"Good morning, Mr. Pepper, my father told me when I came here, that I should have a well-intentioned, kind master, who would teach me what was

right and so I myself believed but — errors excepted. Good day, sir."

"And my account," said the dyer, "you can settle that I suppose. I want from you six thalers."

Mr. Pepper did not make any answer. He wished to appear calm; and unlocking his cash-box, counted out and laid down six thalers on the counter.

The dyer smiled. "It is the custom here, Mr. Pepper," said he, "to lay out two thirds of one's money in goods. I received six thalers; four of them therefore, according to the rule of the house, I shall lay out with Miss Pepper, that I may have an opportunity of wishing her good-bye."

That was too much for Mr. Pepper; he rushed to the tube to warn his sister against admitting the man into the shop. But he was already there and thinking it best not to compromise his dignity by sending for the police and getting into another quarrel with a man of the dyer's character; he took up his black velvet cap, put it on and walked out of the weighing-room without casting another glance at him.

Miss Pepper who had heard every word which passed between her brother and the dyer was just about herself to escape when he was in the shop, and walking up to the counter said with a smile:

"Is it then the custom here, Miss Pepper, that when a man has worked hard for his money that he should have difficulty in getting goods?"

What could she do? It was very unpleasant to her but she was obliged to submit.

The dyer ordered the smallest quantities of an endless number of things, thus making the business last for a whole half hour. Besides which, he scrutinized

the goods, weighed them himself to be sure he was not cheated, and found out now and then a half ounce was short weight. Finally he ended by a glass or two of brandy, rejecting, however, the "essence of flies" as he called it after which, considerably elevated, he stalked away, very proud of his victory.

It was probably owing to this spirituous elevation that passing through the weighing-room again he desired Mr. Brown, to bear in mind that dyers and weavers were men, as well as head clerks and their employers.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Changes.

SUCH scenes as the above did not however occur in our weighing-room, for Mrs. Stieglitz would not adopt a system which was equally injurious to the employer and the employed. Yet even here all was not exactly as it should have been. By degrees I became cognizant of many things which at first surprised me and afterwards confirmed my suspicions of Mr. Specht.

The manufacturing business was entirely under his charge; he dismissed and took on hands as he pleased, and beyond him there was no appeal. Many of the people moreover, were of his religious opinions, looked demure, sang hymns and quoted scripture, all of which, since the remarkable evening when I had been admitted into their communion, had assumed to my mind the character of duplicity and hypocrisy. I also observed that Mr. Specht, besides religious fellowship with these men, had power over them in another way,

the propriety of which I had begun to question. As I have already said, there, as in the general concern he carried on a private business of his own, that is to say, he lent money to the weavers, for which they paid enormous interest and by which means they were entirely in his power. This was a peculiar business, not carried on in his own name any more than in that of the firm, but in the name of an intimate acquaintance, whom I frequently saw in the weighing-room. The money so advanced was repaid weekly or monthly, as the case might be, together with the interest, or rather it was deducted from the wages paid at such times.

As I have said before, the occurrences of the Friday-evening-meeting had made a great change, both as regarded my own feelings and views and my opinion of him. I said nothing, however, neither did he.

I had gone back into my old and far more healthy condition of mind. The sound, good sense of my friend Doctor Burbus, like a strong wholesome wind had blown away all the cobweb fancies and delusions which the teachings of Specht had brought in. I felt now like some one who is awake after a hideous dream. I was infinitely happier; life seemed larger and brighter, and I was again ready for the enjoyment of youth. The only thing that was in any degree painful to me at this time, and yet it was also sweet, was the thought of my cousin Emma. In my wild fanatical dreams the nocturnal shadows and confused imagery which had surrounded her idea, were like the dreary autumnal mists which veil the ascending sun. Now, however, the sun had risen above them and the image of this sweet girl stood bright and clear in my inmost heart.

As may already have been perceived, my friend Doctor Burbus possessed an immense power over me. I was not naturally given to opening my heart, and telling my thoughts freely to every one, nevertheless I did not conceal many things from him; hence he soon became aware of my feelings towards the professor's young daughter. He, however, to my chagrin treated it coolly, as a fancy which might, perhaps, in time mature into love.

"For the present most estimable apprentice," said he in his peculiar manner, "I advise you, to let all such ideas alone and bend your powers solely towards the ascending of that lofty, steep mountain which lies before you, and which you must climb before you have reached a spot on which in the shadow of an achieved industry, you can build your home."

The doctor spoke wisely. He had already climbed that mountain and built his home, and a most beautiful and tasteful home it was, both outside and in. He had taken a small house in one of the best streets in the town where he was living with his beloved Sybil, now the much admired Mrs. Burbus.

I have said nothing of welcoming hither my cousin from the mill; but any one can easily imagine how joyful our meeting had been; how we talked of the old times and the happy life at the mill and what greetings were sent to me from her father and mother, from Elsbeth, Francis and Casper; nay, how the very place itself and all that belonged to it came again before me in their precious memories, the rushing mill-stream, the little room where I kept the books, with its ever-trembling floor, and the large bed in the pleasant little chamber in which I slept. I even re-

membered the cheerful Anna Maria, the farmer's daughter, when we went to the wakes. She too was married and the cuckoo had prophesied truly both for her and Sybil.

I spent my vacant evenings between the house of the doctor and my cousin the professor, and in both I found Emma, for she had now become the dear friend of the doctor's wife. One sorrowful circumstance, however, could not be concealed from any of us, the health of the professor was beginning to fail. Doctor Burbus, whom his family anxiously consulted, could not prevail upon him to take the necessary exercise. He still adhered to his absurd plan of agitating finger and toe to keep the blood in healthy circulation. But it would not do. Doctor Burbus did his utmost to re-establish his health, even under this great disadvantage; but in vain. The time was come, according to the expression of the professor, when death, as a black line, closed the irregular triangle which figures the life of every human being, and gives it over to eternity.

The professor died serenely, as he had lived. But the happy calm of those days could not be continued, after his death to those he had left behind him, in the pleasant house on the hill.

When I accompanied the doctor home after the funeral and we, as was natural sat talking of the melancholy event, an event which I felt very deeply, the doctor shook his head and said,

"Poor Emma, I am truly sorry to believe that a great change is before her and her mother! Her father's circumstances were by no means what we supposed;

and if all be true that I hear, I question if there will be a penny left for them when all is settled!"

These terrible words recalled to me the remark of Mrs. Stieglitz, soon after I went to the shop, that she should be sorry if the professor were obliged to part with his beautiful house and garden in his old age.

If he himself, however, had not this great sorrow during his life-time, no less painful was it to his wife and daughter after his death. The doctor's fears were not without foundation. No sooner was the old man dead than the truth was known to all. He had borrowed money largely and left no property beyond the house and garden. These, therefore, were immediately sold; almost nothing remained to the widow who had no other prospect but to accept an invitation from a sister who resided in a distant part of the country. As for Emma, Doctor and Mrs. Burbus would hear of nothing but that she should remain with them, and after a long consultation it was decided that so it should be, at least for a time.

"But," said the poor, widowed mother, "it must not be otherwise than a temporary visit. Emma feels it her duty equally with myself to look out for some situation in which she can honourably provide for herself."

Such were the altered circumstances of my relatives and it cannot but be supposed that I suffered with them. My horizon seemed again to be glooming. There was a something very depressing too, at this time in our house. Mrs. Stieglitz since the death of her husband appeared to me greatly changed; she was less active and seeming to withdraw herself from the business placed all the more confidence in Mr. Specht,

who on his side I could perceive was quietly stealing into the entire management of every thing.

I was astonished that her husband's death, painful though the circumstances were, should have taken so strong a hold on this clear-headed and independent woman, but spite of the trials and disappointments of her married life she was deeply attached to him. They had been betrothed in their early youth and she loved him with all the ardour, not only of youth but of her strong character, and when, soon after their marriage his excitable temperament shewed itself in occasional outbreaks of insanity, she carefully and wisely watched over him and gained that ascendancy which whilst it kept him under control shielded him in great measure from the opprobrium of the world. She was a brave-hearted woman, a most faithful and loving wife. Under a somewhat hard and stern exterior lay a tender, womanly nature. I perceived this early in my apprenticeship and it had a silent and beneficial influence upon me. If I afterwards broke away from under it, it was not that I esteemed her less or had less value for her regard, but that another spirit had taken possession of me under which I had to pay a severe penalty as will be seen. But to return to Mrs. Stieglitz.

Her marriage was not a happy one; she had no children, though naturally of a maternal character, hence this was a great disappointment to her. She often had wished to adopt a child, but never had done so. Her incessant care and anxiety for her husband and the management of her large business occupied the best years of her life. Now, however, it was increasingly apparent that having ceased to feel the old in-

terest in her business, she was gradually withdrawing from it and so doing placing more and more confidence in her bookkeeper and giving more power into his hands. The effect of this was, I believe wholly unconsciously to herself, to separate me from my worthy employer.

Poor Mamsell Therese, too, seemed to me very much changed. There had never been much friendship between us two, yet on the other hand I had nothing to complain of in her, neither had she in me; we each did our respective duties, neither interfering with the other and that was all. I noticed, however, about this time that she often looked very unhappy; she had long since ceased to torment or to annoy the bookkeeper, and he, as far as I knew, had made no endeavour to convert her or to induce her to attend the evening-meetings. But she was unhappy as I could see; sometimes even I observed that she had been weeping. I was sorry for her, without saying anything to her, and am glad now to remember that I shewed her many little attentions and helped her in various small ways which were not required from me.

One morning I was surprised to hear that she was gone. She had not taken leave of me, at which I was annoyed, because I had of late been as I have said, intentionally kind to her.

A few days afterwards when I was in the town I met her accidentally, coming from Dr. Burbus's and again she had been weeping.

Almost before we stopped she held out her hand, saying:

"I'm glad to bid you good-bye. Don't quite forget me. I'm very unhappy — and she sobbed bitterly."

Without waiting for a reply, she again took my

hand, pressed it and hurried away. I have never seen her from that day.

Astonished at thus meeting her, by her agitated manner and vexed not to have heard why she had thus left us, I hastened to the doctor and entering his consulting room, found him sealing up an envelope which he then put into a private drawer.

On my inquiring about our late shopwoman, he said:

"I can tell you nothing, my good fellow, nothing more than you know, that that young woman has left Mrs. Stieglitz's service. Why she has done so, will be revealed, not when the dead are raised, but when the wicked are called to judgment, which in my opinion will be before very long."

CHAPTER XXXV.

Emma.

I ASKED leave of absence on the day of my cousin's sale and went there for a short time. It was very painful to me. Crowds of common people filled the garden and the house. The most valuable and beautiful articles of furniture were taken down, handled and talked and joked about with coarse witticisms and depreciated by those who wished to buy them cheap. It mattered not to poor Joco that he shouted "*Filou*" or screamed out "*Mort de ma vie*;" he was the very first article put up for sale.

But why need I speak about it! It was a sale by auction. Everybody understands that melancholy business and that is enough.

Emma naturally knew nothing of what was going forward. They kept the knowledge of it from her that it might not add to her sorrow. For the rest, she was as comfortable and as happy as it was possible for her to be with the doctor and his wife. Nothing, however, could persuade her to abandon the idea of taking a situation which would enable her to maintain herself and do something for her mother, and she earnestly besought her friends to aid her in carrying out her wishes.

The doctor would not listen to this idea. Both, he and Sybil were greatly attached to her and desired nothing more than that she should remain with them altogether.

"Stay here with my wife," the doctor said; "you are comfortable here; we don't want to part with you; why should we? One thing, however, I will promise if anything uncommonly attractive offers we'll talk further about it, till then I beseech of you not to think any more about it."

But Emma continued to think about it. Although she thoroughly loved the doctor's wife, although under other circumstances she probably would not have objected to pay them a visit of a twelvemonth, yet now she regarded every day in which she delayed to seek for a situation as neglect of duty not only to herself but to her mother for whom it was her warmest and dearest wish to provide a comfortable home.

One day she took me aside and opened her plans to me, shewing me how necessary it was immediately to carry them out, begging me to do my utmost in assisting her. The doctor had, however, prepared me for this and I followed his instruction by assuring her

that it was the most difficult thing in the world, to find a situation for her or any other young lady. She was not like a common person; she was so accomplished and unfit to rough it in the world. "Why will you not," said I, "remain where you are. Sybil is so fond of you."

"Why?" returned she warmly, "why? Because I don't wish to be a burden to others and above all not to my dearest, best friends. Why did not you stay at the mill?" said she gravely; "they were very fond of you there and would, I dare say, have kept you for two years."

I could say nothing against this; and yet I was unwilling to do for her what she wished; in the first place the doctor had strictly forbidden it, in the second, I was selfish enough to desire that my sweet, young cousin should not leave the town, and above all that she should remain at the doctor's where I could constantly see her.

No more was said on the subject. Time went on. Emma seemed to have adopted our views and was apparently perfectly satisfied to leave things as they were, when the doctor was one day surprised, after his virtual dismissal from the house of Mrs. Stieglitz, to be summoned there and that by a letter in Specht's handwriting. This was all the more astonishing, as a fellow graduate of his, newly established in the town, a clever young man but one of Specht's brother-believers, and one with whom Burbus had no intercourse, had for some time attended the family as their medical man.

He found the head of the firm in her room seated at her desk, with her spectacles on, engaged in reading

a number of letters which the morning's post had brought in. She extended her hand in the most friendly manner to the doctor who took a seat and was as perfectly at his ease as if he had been there only yesterday. But he was, as he told me afterwards, greatly shocked to see how much she was aged in this short time, how much less of energy there seemed to be in her manner. She took off her spectacles, leaned back in her chair and seemed not at all disinclined to listen, nay even to enjoy the cheerful conversation and jokes of the doctor. He was always inclined to be merry where there was no occasion to be sad, and she too laughed with him. Nobody, indeed, could be offended with the doctor; he had such a singularly good-tempered way even of saying the most caustic things.

"Have done with your jokes," said the lady at length, smiling pleasantly.

The doctor was silent, smiled in his turn and waited for her to speak.

"I have sent for you, my dear sir," she said, "not for a medical consultation, for thank God, my health is good, but to speak with you on a subject, in which we both, I believe, are interested. In the first place I will trouble you to read this letter."

The doctor opened the letter which she handed to him, and literally rubbed his eyes to be sure that he saw properly when he had read the commencement and looked to the signature.

"Well, that's too bad!" said he. "But you are not inclined to this proposal, Madame Stieglitz?" he asked.

"Why not?" returned she. "I knew the family

well; they have been unfortunate, but they are most estimable people; she is a sweet young girl, well educated and accomplished, so my bookkeeper assures me, and he has visited at her father's."

"Ay, indeed!" said the doctor angrily, "that Mr. Specht—" he checked himself, for he was about to curse him—then swallowing as it were the terrible words, he said, "it won't do, Mrs. Stieglitz; it won't do at all!"

"And why not? Is she a girl whom you can recommend? I sent to you, my dear sir, that I might speak to you about her. She has been staying with you, I think, since her father's death."

"Whom one can recommend?" said the doctor, "oh, as for that, any family would be fortunate who had under their roof such a noble, good creature as she is!"

"Then I should not be disinclined," said Mrs. Stieglitz, "to receive her and that upon the most advantageous terms."

"But I should be very much disinclined to let her leave my house," said the doctor.

"She foresaw that," returned the elderly lady, mildly; "and she has written a private letter to me, the first was addressed to the firm—and it is precisely this second letter in which she speaks of the kind and hospitable manner in which you have received her and of her wish to do something for her own livelihood, which has especially won upon my heart. Your testimony quite satisfies me, my dear sir, and I will give this situation to Mamsell Emma with pleasure."

"As shopwoman?" asked the doctor, with a smile

which was peculiar to him, when he was keeping down his anger.

"No, not quite so; that situation is already supplied," returned she. "You see, sir," she said, "I am getting older every day and I am not as strong as I was; I am not, indeed, what I was a year ago; my eyes are beginning to fail. I am occupying myself less and less with business. I sometimes sit for hours alone, given up to my own thoughts. This is not good for any one; I should, therefore, like to have some agreeable young person about me, to talk with me and with whom I could be on affectionate terms; some amiable girl who would understand an old woman and learn in time to like her."

The doctor on this remark fixed his eyes earnestly on the lady and said with prolonged emphasis,

"It is not to be denied that you offer advantages to this unprovided-for girl at which the friends of most such would snatch eagerly; but you must bear in mind that Emma, although carefully educated and highly accomplished and with a heart as pure as gold—we medical men understand these things—yet still I would make you fully aware that Emma is not, I may call, a religionist; she is of a grateful, pious disposition; but she has at the same time a clear, acute intellect. She is, in short, what Mr. Specht would term one of the unconverted."

Mrs. Stieglitz did not immediately reply. She sat, with her eyes cast down in evident cogitation.

"I understand you perfectly," at length she replied, "and the censure which your words imply. But I hope to Heaven that you do an injustice to me and my friends. I, at least, am no hypocrite. If I have erred

in judgment, God will forgive me. The views and the practices which I have adopted, have no secondary thought, but only for the peace of my own conscience and the honour and glory of the Supreme Being."

Having so said, she rose with a grave majesty. Her countenance was calm and benignant, yet tears were in her eyes. It was impossible to mistake the pure and deeply religious character of her mind. She offered her hand without farther remark to the doctor and he took it with the profoundest respect, and bowing silently, withdrew.

I saw him come downstairs and was struck by the grave and angry expression of his countenance, still more when he seized my arm and dragged me with him into the dining-room.

Here he eyed me from head to foot and then said: "You're a nice fellow, that you are! Do you call that keeping faith with a friend? Did I not beg of you, nay, expressly command, I a man older than yourself, and one who always meant well by you. Didn't I tell you, not to help Emma in her mad schemes of getting a situation? And now you would smuggle her into this house as shopwoman. You rascal! If you were ill I'd give you a dose of Prussic acid, and so rid the world of such a crawling insect!"

I stood speechless, and when I could open my mouth assured him in the most solemn manner that I knew nothing at all of the whole business, giving him my word of honour that I had done all in my power to dissuade Emma from her project, when she had spoken of it to me. But that was long since.

The doctor believed me; indeed, he had no reason to do otherwise, for I had never deceived him.

"Then that foolish girl has seen and answered the advertisement in the paper. There is no guiding those determined, independent people!"

He turned abruptly to the door and without another word left the house still very angry.

It was as the doctor said; Emma was of a determined and independent character, who when she had once taken a resolution, as she conceived in accordance with her duty, could not be induced, excepting on the most sufficient grounds to give it up. And, indeed, when it now came to the argument neither Sybil nor I could see any reason why she should not take a situation in so respectable a house as that of Messrs. Stieglitz & Comp., at the head of which was a woman of the most estimable character. Of course, no one could think much less favourably of Specht than I did, but I had now comparatively little to do with him. He had ceased to interest himself about my soul and I understood my department of the business so thoroughly and it was in great measure distinct from his, so that he ceased to annoy me. Mamsell Therese's successor too, a staid woman of middle age, who had been for years in a business like ours, had fallen into her place and taken up her duties like an exact piece of machinery, so that the fact of my cousin Emma taking a situation here seemed to me to have nothing objectionable in it.

Such was the result of my cogitations when an evening or two afterwards the doctor and I being alone he began to speak of the subject and so doing seemed to regard the character of Specht still more unfavourably than even I did; in short, he said that he was

acquainted with facts which had yet not come to my knowledge.

"I never was so perplexed before," said he, "I don't know whether to give Emma a hint of these things or not. It is a most difficult thing to know what to do. As to Mrs. Stieglitz herself, there is not a word to be said against her; but if I were to go and blow up the character of this precious bookkeeper, she'd never believe me. She thinks him a saint. I know these sort of people; they hold together like a chain, good and bad together. No, things must take their course, only we must keep our eyes open.

"There's something rotten in the state of Denmark "

added he. "But as for you, take care and keep the direct and honest course. Give up all thoughts of love-making and such nonsense with Emma. If you want my advise at any time come to me, and above all, if you see anything suspicious let me know."

Everything was soon settled and Emma came to live under our roof. It seemed to be a matter of perfect indifference to the bookkeeper. He was civil, nay even polite to her, but not more so than was natural, considering that in her father's life-time he had visited at the house. There was nothing in his behaviour which I, suspicious, and on the constant watch, as I was, could object to. He seemed well-satisfied with the arrangement and that was all. As for me, it was an inexpressible pleasure, which I confessed silently to myself almost every hour of the day, that Emma was living in the same house with me, that I met her at our meals and was continually able to render her some little service or other.

We had now also a new apprentice; I say *we*, because I had actually been consulted on this great occasion. The new apprentice, my successor was no other than that young Block whom we have seen before in Mr. Pepper's weighing-room. He was generally employed in the shop and as Mr. Specht had of late almost exclusively devoted himself to the retail department and the new shop-woman was so efficient, there was nothing for a fourth to do. Emma, therefore, spent her time in the room occupied by the head of the firm herself. Here she was employed in needlework or knitting or in reading aloud. Quiet and unobtrusive as she was, she very soon acquired a strong influence over the entire household. Everybody seemed to behave themselves with greater propriety and decorum and not in any way to give occasion for Mrs. Stieglitz to reprove them, at least, not when Emma was present. Her influence on the new apprentice, whose training had been considerably neglected, was very remarkable. A word or even a glance of disapproval from her would make him careful for a week after.

Our intercourse, I mean that especially between her and myself was kind and cordial, yet I could not but observe by many little circumstances that I was now treated less as a cousin than a business-colleague. She had formerly appeared to like my society; we stood in a relationship which set us at perfect ease with each other. I loved her, and I believed that she loved me, and though we had never confessed as much, still this blessed consciousness had introduced a tender harmony into our lives, which was never disturbed either by avowal or emotion: now things were altogether different. A barrier had risen up between us, and as it seemed

to me, wholly of her own planning. Formerly at meeting and parting we gave each other a kiss and not unfrequently I used to take her hand as we talked or sat together.

Now she permitted no such freedoms, saying that they would not do—that they were out of place and wholly unseemly.

I was greatly annoyed more especially as I had a perverse pleasure in shewing the friendly, familiar terms we were upon, before the bookkeeper.

At length, Emma could bear it no longer and on one occasion when we were alone, calmly and almost sternly reproached me for my conduct. Although I felt that she was right that it was good sense, as well as maidenly modesty which made her speak and act thus, and that as she said, Mrs. Stieglitz herself would most likely be displeased by any love-making going on in her house, yet my pride and my unbroken temper would not be guided, and whilst I loved her with all the ardour of a first love I now determined to punish her by perfect indifference.

At once, therefore, assuming a cold and offended manner I returned to the counting-house and went through the day's duties with a solemn earnestness resolving not to bestow a thought on so worthless a subject; nevertheless I thought of nothing else and as the day wore on and my anger a little abated, I began to question whether it might not be as well to submit my judgment to appeal. I went, therefore, in the evening to Doctor Burbus's for having entire faith in him I deigned to tell him the exact state of the case.

I found him just returned from a round of visits quite willing to hear my story. I was candour

itself and really could not help admiring my own openheartedness. I told him of my attachment to my cousin and that I had been perfectly satisfied with the terms on which we stood to each other, till she had come to live under our roof.

Here the doctor interrupted me by the question, "how old are you, my most esteemed shop-man?"

"I was twenty last birthday," I replied and drew myself up to my full height for I was now a tall young man.

"Well, what more?"

This question so simple in itself, threw me off my equilibrium and, however, clear the first part of my story might be, and calculated as I thought, to make a good impression, all the more confused and illogical was the second part, nor could I avoid seeing that an evident merriment was dancing in the doctor's eyes, nevertheless when I had done he was again quite serious and said, after a pause:

"I thank you for your candour, which is praiseworthy towards an old friend. But your whole story is an idle exaggeration from beginning to end. That girl has now and then let you take her hand, she has now and then given you, her cousin, a kiss. And what of all that? That she never meant anything serious, is as clear as daylight, and yet you come here fancying that she is in love with you, and on that foolish idea are going to compromise the poor girl in the very house, where she has to gain her bread. You must excuse me, but when I see Emma I shall tell her that she has done perfectly right. My dear old fellow, I don't want to hurt your feelings, but all medicine is bitter; and you'll someday thank me, if now, I prescribe

A LITTLE LONGER IN YOUR MIND-BOY. THAT THEY CAN RUN THE
 RISK OF AN AFTER-NOON THAT THEY HAVE IMMENSE DELIRIUM.
 FOR THE VERY REASON THAT THEY HAVE I THINK CONFESS, MADE
 FROM THE IF YOUR TIME IF THE PAIN AND MIGHT GET A
 VERY GOOD SITUATION IN SOME OTHER BRANCH OF BUSINESS.
 THE FIRM OF STEPHENS & COMPANY IS NOT EXPANSIVE ENOUGH
 FOR YOU. I AM THINKING OF THE TIME THE WORLD AND LEARN
 SOMETHING OF LIFE. I HAVE WRITTEN TO YOUR GUARDIAN
 ON THIS SUBJECT. LOOK AROUND YOU CAREFULLY: HOLD UP YOUR
 HEAD THAT A MAN. BUT IN TWO OR SIX YEARS WE'LL TALK
 ABOUT THIS LITTLE-BOY AGAIN."

I CAN NOT SAY A SINGLE WORD IN REPLY, BUT TAKING
 UP MY HAT WALKED DRESSING HOME. THE DOCTOR WAS
 BOTH RIGHT AND WRONG. I KNEW BETTER THAN TO BELIEVE
 THAT EMMA HAD NEVER FELT A WARMER SENTIMENT THAN
 THAT OF A RELATIVE FOR ME. BUT THAT SHE WAS NOW TOTALLY
 CHANGED WAS JUST AS CERTAIN, AND HOW PAINFUL THIS WAS,
 NO WORDS COULD EXPRESS.

I TURNED THE DOCTOR'S WORDS OVER AND OVER IN MY
 MIND. I OUGHT TO GO OUT INTO THE WORLD AND SEE SOME-
 THING OF LIFE. TO THIS I HAD NO OBJECTION; BUT I UNDER-
 STOOD IT SOMEWHAT DIFFERENTLY TO WHAT HE INTENDED AS
 THE READER WILL SEE IN THE COURSE OF ANOTHER CHAPTER.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Hobble-de-hoy-hood.

WHEN one sees dear children, those pretty, little
 creatures, miniature-editions of father and mother,
 endowed in small with their virtues and their failings,
 one instantly sees by their sports and occupations the
 difference between the boy and the girl. Though

their dresses may be of the same length, though their fair hair may be exactly curled and parted alike, the stronger sex makes itself seen from the very earliest years. The boy destroys and scatters abroad, the girl collects together and builds up anew. He is dominant with the hammer, breaks window-panes and knocks down flower-pots; snatches up a knife that he may cut the table; she, on the contrary, cleans the window with her little apron; plants the ball-bouquet of her mamma in a flower-pot and if she ever gets a knife or pair of scissors into her hand, it is only with the intention of cutting a dress for her doll out of mamma's best apron. So it goes on and the older the girl grows the gentler and more thoughtful she becomes, whilst the boy becomes only the more mischievous and defiant. He can crow like the cock, and bellow like the ox and neigh like the horse; he wears his trousers out at the knees and runs splinters into his hands; he knows how the wolf lolls out his tongue, how papa crushes on his hat, how he breaks his pipe and knocks off the end of his cigar.

These mischievous pranks and amusing monkey-ways of early laddish life, combined with that embarrassed ungainliness, which people smile at with immense amiability, very seldom make the parents angry. They console themselves by the thought that this is a dispensation that passes over, and by and by the youngster will be sensible and well-behaved. But the youngster will not become so in a hurry, of that they may be sure.

In a while he goes with his sister to the *Kindergarten*, or infant-school. They both go in the morning in clean dresses and white pinafores, and the little

maiden comes home again very nearly as clean and neat as she went; the boy, on the contrary, is dirty up to his eyes and his clothes are torn; his school-fellow Fred threw his cap into a puddle, so he smashed Fred's slate — for the young rascal knows how to take revenge.

At length, the time comes when all the friends of the family, male and female, can stand the ill-manners of the young gentleman no longer. Even the old aunt who has brought him up and who, as a matter of course has spoiled him, begins to lose all patience with him, she who in reality has to thank herself for a great deal of this mischief; she it was who allowed him now and then, when nobody saw him, to have a chase after the cat with the fly-flap, or to creep into the dog-kennel. Then when his father was displeased by these achievements and forbade them for the future, who was it but the old aunt herself, that washed him and made all right and kissed him and declared that it was a pleasure to hear him barking in the dog-kennel, for even Carlo could not do it so naturally as he did.

He is now five years old and the aunt makes it a pleasure to herself to sing, the spoiled little urchin to sleep every night, and then hides something nice from supper, under her apron, that he may have it to eat when she goes to bed; he half asleep all the while, yet ravenously hungry. And if you were to talk to the aunt about this as an irrational and unwholesome custom, what would the good woman reply:

"Ah, such a little child, and such a long night!"

True, and the aunt, poor, old soul has to pay for it both now and for long years to come!

The girl, in the meantime, has developed accord-

ing to her kind. She dresses her doll; cooks for it and feeds it. People are delighted with her quiet demeanour, and just as much on the other hand, are they delighted with the ungovernable spirits of the boy, for say they he means no harm; it's his nature and he is a good little fellow at the bottom. Like his compeers, from whom he has learned most of his pranks, he is tall of his age and pale; his aunt has had his long, fair hair cut off and this she keeps carefully folded in paper and shews to him on Sundays and holidays when she says to him with a sigh:

"Do you see, this is the hair of good, dear little Willie, who is now gone and we have in his stead a great big fellow who does all kinds of naughty things and makes his poor old aunt very sorry!"

And now the heart of the good, old aunt has turned towards the pretty little, six-years old girl, who does all in her small power to be of use to her. She shells the peas for her in the kitchen; she can snuff the candle; she knows where to look for the hymn-book and the spectacles, and never forgets to wipe the glass with her little apron before she hands it to her aunt.

The son and heir, on the contrary, does all he can to wring her old heart; he ties the dog and cat tail and tail together; he thunders about the house on his drum like an insane creature; he is always breaking glass and one day committed the greatest of all offences, broke his aunt's spectacles and took out the glasses which he stuck one at each end of a hollow cane, to make a telescope with. Besides all this, he is a great musical genius and when he sings, in his loud-crowing voice he keeps time with the tongs or the fireshovel, till the noise goes through you.

Neither does his appearance improve all this time; he grows out of proportion; he is lazy, voracious of food, sleepy and boisterous at the same time. His father shrugs his shoulders and says:

"It is always so with growing boys; he is coming into his hobble-de-hoy-hood."

As one character develops itself earlier and another later, so is the attainment to this period of boy-life; this outbreak of the moral disease, equally uncertain. It usually takes place between the ages of ten and sixteen; sometimes it shews itself quietly and comes stealing on silently and insidiously, again it is wild and noisy, a period of tumult and impulse; then it is that the hopeful young gymnasiast prepares himself secretly by small beginnings for the grand drinking-bouts of the High School or University. In these especial years of hobble-de-hoy-hood, this growing male-individual is the most intolerably irascible being in the whole creation. He is excessively lazy too, which in this condition of soul may be easily understood, nevertheless his propensity for all kind of foolish pranks is indescribable, from which cause, the instructor of youth is the most tried and tormented being on the face of the earth, hence it is a lamentable fact that he has such miserable payment for all his labour and his endless vexations.

Nevertheless the early time of hobble-de-hoy-hood is very enjoyable and affords many most delightful memories to those who were the actors therein. How delicious, for instance, were those stolen apples; nay, even that horrible squeamishness which the first cigar produced, comes in remembrance to be surrounded by delightful splendour; how little we regarded the burnt

fingers when we plundered the father's powder-flask to make spitting devils, one ever greater than the other, till the last, which was too dry, and went off in our hands!

Innumerable the panes of glass which we broke out of carelessness or mischief; and then the damage that was done when we practised fencing at home and exhibiting some brilliant feat of skill, knocked down the lamp on the tea-service and so made a universal stramash!

Nay, even the higher and more dangerous demonstrations of hobble-de-hoy-hood which now are more properly wild-oat-sowing are charming in remembrance. Who has not changed public-house and other signs; broken house-door bell-wires; demolished street-lamps, or stretched a shing across the street, and then afterwards grown up into a clever officer of the state, or something else equally respectable?

The tender blossoms of love frequently also produce their first fruit at this season; the youngster selects some playfellow of his sister for his beloved and in order to please or win her regard he seeks to gain renown under the wing of an acquaintance of his, the boldest of all the set; as a matter of course the strongest and the most daring; therefore, he appears before her triumphantly with a black eye, or a swollen nose. She loves flowers too, therefore, the roses from his father's garden are gathered and bound into an enormous nosegay for her. He is now much more respectful to his aunt because he wants her to give him a bow of gold ribbon to put in the hair of his beloved, and she, good soul, is persuaded to do so.

He keeps, as a precious relic a fragment of her dress torn on a rose-bush in the garden, and writes love-letters, which his father discovering punishes

severely, and which are discontinued; the beloved moreover proves unfaithful, for she goes with the son of a neighbour and his family an excursion into the country.

So severe, however, are the wounds of love and jealousy in the heart of this young fellow, that he is in a state of desperate excitement; when he comes home he cannot eat anything and his aunt whose tenderness is reawakened by his present sad condition, gives him double the amount of pocket-money, of which his father has deprived him. He drinks a great deal of wine, runs up a number of small debts and then perceives that he must begin a new course of life. He has fermented himself out and the wine of his life, which was till now a muddy, unrefreshing mass, begins to clear itself.

As the reader will have perceived, by my own candid confession, this first period of my boy-life occurred on a large scale whilst I was in the Reissmehl's servitude, and there I parted from it. Still it is by no means an uncommon case for this period to occur a second time in a life, and though with much less violence than at first, nevertheless it is more dangerous both to soul and body. To return to our simile of the wine; in the spring of the year, when all nature is penetrated anew with vital energy, thousands of flowers burst forth, a newer, a more potent breath of life streams forth and the fragrant atmosphere is thrilled with an unknown, mighty impulse of joy. This extends even into the depths of the wine-cellar and the clear wine begins again to ferment. A skilful hand, however, who understands these mysterious workings of nature, *can subdue the excitement and impart even by that*

means a higher, purer clearness to the noble liquor; whilst on the other hand, the unskilled interferer only muddies the wine more and more, so that it needs still greater efforts to make it again what it was at first.

I was precisely in this case. I had experienced the thrill of joy of a new spring. I scorned and rejected the skilful hand of a friend. The wine of my life again was muddy and this second period of my folly was far worser than the first.

I now determined to enjoy my life and for this purpose sought that class of boon companions which I had hitherto shunned. Mrs. Stieglitz who had entire confidence in me put no restriction on my free time and of this, my rapidity and thorough knowledge of the business, enabled me to have a good deal.

At six o'clock the weighing-room and counting-house which were my departments, were closed for in the shop I had nothing to do. Mr. Specht threw no impediments in my way. I was at liberty to go where I liked, nay it rather appeared to please him than otherwise when I went out. About eight o'clock the business of the shop was generally over and then all were at liberty, as had always been the case, to join Mrs. Stieglitz in her large, handsome sitting-room, where Emma, was now her almost constant companion, where there was reading aloud or conversation and occasionally visitors.

The little evening-group was generally assembled round the large circular table, my place being naturally by Emma. But now that I was so generally absent Mr. Specht occupied my place, and though I might appear satisfied as I took my hat and went out, yet I

was not so, and everytime I saw it I felt a stab in my heart, more especially as I fancied that nobody took any notice of me and that Emma only now and then cast an anxious, inquiring one towards me. If she had asked me to stay I should have done so; but she did not and I hurried away therefore to companions by whom I was always warmly welcomed. Neither did I go very frequently to the doctor's.

He, on his side, appeared indifferent whether I went there or stayed away.

"If you are better entertained elsewhere," said he to me one day when I offered a sort of apology for not going, "I am quite satisfied."

Sybil was the only one who seemed still to take a kindly interest in me.

"It is not right of you," she said, "to leave poor Emma alone amongst those people who are comparatively strangers to her. You don't seem as if you troubled your mind at all about her."

I laughed with a painful bitterness of feeling and as I buttoned my carefully fitting, delicate gloves, said:

"What does Emma care about my company? She has Mrs. Stieglitz, and all her religious friends, and that detestable Specht and young Block — a precious, delectable lot, they are altogether!"

And taking up my hat I went out.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

The Wild-Oat-Harvest.

As I was inwardly greatly altered, so I was outwardly. I was a tall, good-looking young man and very careful and elaborate in my toilet. The young men with whom I associated were of my own class and similar to me in all respects. It must also be understood that I was a great favourite amongst my companions and my society was much sought by them. I was naturally witty and had an immense amount of good spirits; I was *au fait* in all the habits and slang of the students; I was a capital dancer and if a horse was not too mettlesome, could sit him with perfect ease if not grace and not unfrequently indulged myself with a gallop on a Sunday afternoon past the windows of the ladies with whom I had danced the foregoing evening.

That I was allowed by Mrs. Stieglitz to have my own latch-key may be readily understood, but I think I ought also to say that though I devoted myself so much to pleasure yet that I attended to my business both with zeal and industry. The whole of the manufacturing department was entirely in my hands and it was a great pleasure to me to have completely superseded Mr. Specht, whom I so cordially hated. I got rid by degrees of all the canting people whom he had introduced into the works. Not that I was unjust to any of them; but I must confess that if these particular men and women slighted their work or were not reputable in their own conduct, I shewed no mercy to them

and replaced them with others more to my mind; and I must say for myself that by this plan I got together the best hands in the place.

It may seem singular that so young a man as myself should in so short a time have acquired so much power and influence, nor would it have been possible, had not Mrs. Stieglitz perceived that I could be, in this particular branch of the business especially useful. My mind was of a practical turn and soon mastered all the details of the business, besides which I possessed a peculiar talent for the arrangement of colours together with that combined sense of beauty, harmony and exact fitness of one thing to another which is properly good taste. Hence I was able to devise new material, at all events new designs and new samples of colour, which gained universal admiration, on which account our goods were greatly in demand and brought good prices.

It must not be supposed, however, that the gay life I was now leading was dissolute in the worst sense of the term. I did simply like thousands of other young men who have a certain amount of money and time at command; use them in the way most agreeable to themselves. The place of our evening-meetings was not one of the first taverns of the town, but a small, quiet house where there was excellent wine and where we could play as high as our means allowed.

In any other city, especially those on the Rhine, we should have been merely considered a set of merry fellows; here, however, in this industrious, manufacturing town, amongst grave shopkeepers and manufacturers, who regarded the slightest deviation from the right line as an approach to mortal sin, our little company

was condemned and we were scouted as young men who were running a dangerous career.

We were not, however, either gamblers or drunkards. Heaven forbid! It was only that we loved a spree, and were ready for any merriment that offered itself. Then we were alive to whatever was going on; never neglected a ball or a dancing entertainment, and the good daughters of those quiet families, in which we were regarded as horribly corrupt young fellows, were not displeased to see us appear, because they could not help secretly confessing that we were very much more amusing than any other young men and infinitely better dancers.

Mr. Specht to whom our nightly revelries and other follies were not unknown, did his best to depreciate me in the eyes of my principal, and it is astonishing to me that his endeavours were for so long unavailing. I, foolish fellow, that I was, did not know that I had a guardian angel by the seat of judgment who spoke in my favour. Emma, in truth, turned aside every storm from me and although she never spoke a word on the subject to any one, not even told the doctor and his wife how much my conduct grieved her, she made light of my little faults as she called them, to the head of the firm, and never lost her faith in my coming ultimately right.

Oh! I did not know that, and, instead, treated the love which she had for me, as a thing of little value. How often when I returned at night would I go to my room singing a merry song, though truth to say, I did this rather in a spirit of defiance to Specht, whose chamber was situated so near to mine. Nevertheless I cannot deny that I thought many a time to myself,

it is all right that she should hear, how merry you are, spite of the coldness with which she treats you!

I, however, with all my assumed merriment had not much of it in the bottom of my heart. I was not at peace with myself, and often when I woke in the morning it was with an unspeakable depression, an acute moral suffering in which I clearly saw that even if my present course of life brought no disgrace on the business still that it could not long be tolerated in as regular and truly religious a family, as, spite of Specht and his pretensions, that of Mrs. Stieglitz, really was.

I had now wholly sundered myself from the domestic life of the family. There was no longer a place left for me in the evening-circle, and on the few occasions when I did make an attempt to join it, I could not but be aware that the conversation was restrained and that I had become a stranger there. Emma kept her eyes gravely fixed on her needlework, and the book which remained unfinished from the evening before, lay unopened.

Young Block, in the meantime, was the only one, who apparently continued faithful to me. I had taken great pains in teaching him his duties; had broken him of his noisy and unbecoming habits, and as I really had a liking for the youth I took great pleasure in his improvement and the stability with which he now applied himself to his business. He regarded me on the other hand, with great respect as his senior and with grateful affection as his friend.

One evening, therefore, when we were alone, in the upper sitting-room, where he had retired for the sake of a little private study to which he was then devoting himself, and I to remove myself from the

domestic group in Mrs. Stieglitz's room, he pushed aside his books and began abruptly to say that I must beware of the schemes of the bookkeeper.

I naturally demanded what he meant.

"I heard," replied the youth, "a conversation between Mr. Specht and our head; and he had very pretty things to tell about you; about your being out so late at nights, and — I say, you won't be offended at me — about all your bad goings on."

I was confounded by this, but assuming considerable indifference, simply inquired, "well, and what did she say?"

"She said it was very painful to her that any one belonging to her family should conduct himself so ill; and if it really were so, then she would make a change."

"Indeed, make a change!" returned I, and I must confess, that knowing, the meaning of this to be, that I should leave, I felt a deep pain in the innermost of my heart; it would remove me from Emma; "But," said I, "what really can they allege against me?"

Block hesitated, and fixed his eye on his books.

"If you know anything," said I, "tell me out point-blank. I shall be very thankful to you, and I won't betray you."

The young man continued, "Well, if you must know, Specht said, that you were bringing nothing but disgrace on the business, and then he began to talk about a Mr. Steffens."

"Oh, indeed!" said I, "and what the devil does Specht know about Steffens?"

Block shrugged his shoulders, and I began to reflect. Unquestionably there was something to be said about

Steffens, and though I was perfectly innocent in the affair, still appearances were somewhat against me. This Steffens had been recommended to me as an industrious and very clever hand, by a person of my acquaintance, who at the same time strongly urged me to take him into our employment. I, according, took him on, but soon had cause to regret doing so, for although remarkably skilful at his trade, he was drunken and unreliable and I had already threatened to dismiss him; but besides his own personal failings he was the father of a very handsome daughter, whose reputé was of the most questionable character; thus, if Specht attributed my having taken on the father, out of some consideration for the daughter, nothing could well be more offensive and repugnant to our principal and she would have the most perfect right to withdraw both her favour for and her confidence in me! And Emma—at the thought of her, my countenance flashed crimson.

"What an infamous villain!" said I, meaning Specht, doubled up my fist involuntarily, and threw the cigar which I had been smoking into the stove-pan. I then sprang to my feet and thanking the young fellow for his candour, said: "Well, I've heard enough for once!"

"You have not heard all though!" returned he, in a low voice.

"What the devil has he more to say? What more filth has he to throw on me? Out with it!"

"Well, he says," returned the youth, speaking low and as if unwillingly, "that your great expenditure is out of all proportion to your income, and—"

I stood as if struck by a thunder-bolt and could hardly breathe; a gulf seemed to have opened under my feet of which I had had no apprehension. Although

I was perfectly conscious of entire innocence in this respect, yet I felt as if the venom of this malicious man had actually affected me, and that this monstrous accusation somehow or other involved me in guilt. I had foolishly prided myself, on the fact, that whilst I was a young man who enjoyed life to the full, yet that I had never failed in duty to my superiors, never neglected business for pleasure.

What was to be done? Should I go and ask council from Doctor Burbus? No, I was too proud for that; neither must I in any way compromise Block.

I, therefore, resolved to do nothing just then; but wait and see what turn things took and be henceforth more circumspect than I had been.

The poison, however, of the bookkeeper acted against me more quickly than I expected, though with less violence. The next day I was summoned to the presence of my principal, and as I entered the room, Emma was coming out, she did not look at me, but I saw that she had been weeping.

Mrs. Stieglitz sat in her large chair as usual with her spectacles on. These she took off on my entrance and fixing her eyes sternly upon me, began with almost severity.

"I have," she said, "in every way had such perfect confidence in you, that I have placed the management of the manufactory in your hands, and I must acknowledge that I have seen no reason to be dissatisfied in having done so. As a man of business you have given me no cause of complaint — still I have perceived with pain — nay with most acute pain," continued the worthy lady, "that your way of life has of late changed most disadvantageously, so as to grieve

your best friends. You have attached yourself, as I hear to a company of young men of dissipated character, men who though already at years of discretion addict themselves to follies which are hardly excusable in boys.

"Believe me," she continued now speaking with deep solemnity, "I have often prayed for you. I have hoped that you would yourself see the impropriety of your irregular life. I might have reasoned as others would have done, that you were not my son, why should I trouble myself about you? If the business of the firm were carefully attended to and its honour maintained, I might be indifferent to the rest. But I have not reasoned so; I have borne you daily on my heart as a human being in whose well-fare both temporally and spiritually I was deeply concerned, if not in part responsible, now, however, the silent anxiety and the prayerful wrestling for you with God is not sufficient. I have a duty to myself and to the firm of which I am the head which requires me to call you to account. My good name shall not be compromised."

I listened to this address in the deepest silence, and my heart was profoundly touched. Again after a pause she continued.

"A circumstance has come to my knowledge which touches the honour of my firm, and is calculated to bring discredit on my business. You have taken a person, a weaver, into my employ, who is a man of bad character and whose family is truly disreputable."

"You refer to Steffens," I replied, calmly.

"Quite right," returned she. "You know him. Are then my charges against him incorrect?"

"They are not," I replied, "but, dear Mrs. Stieglitz,

if you will allow me to say a word or two in my vindication, this man was recommended to me by an acquaintance, on whose word I had every reason to rely, as an industrious and very skilful hand. And I can solemnly assure you, that I knew nothing to the disadvantage either of him or his family; neither have I to this day seen any one of his family, nor," added I, — most thankful in my soul for Block's warning — "was I aware till lately that they were people of bad repute; yesterday, however, he had his dismissal, for though a remarkably good hand he is an unsteady worker and has been threatened with his discharge repeatedly."

This was perfectly true. After my conversation with Block I went to the weighing-room; the man had just brought in his work and I discharged him.

The calmness and readiness with which I was thus able to meet the charge against me, evidently produced a favourable effect on the mind of my principal."

"Thank God," she said, with a voice of great relief, "that the affair stands thus. You may believe me when I say, that I feel the most lively interest in your well-being. Take my words to heart, and if the life which you are now leading does not of itself become intolerable to you, I shall still pray, that God would enlighten your darkness and make you see that such a mode of conduct is not calculated to win either the esteem or love of good people."

I was again very much touched, and the excellent woman observing it, gave me her hand which I kissed reverentially.

"I thank you," I said, "most sincerely for every word you have said; though it was so severe at first.

But, oh, you do not know," added I, speaking out of the very depths of my heart, "how I feel the interest you take in me. I have neither father nor mother, and am almost alone in the world, and even your severity when united with kindness and cordiality draws me towards you as to a parent. And you shall see, indeed, you shall, that I will not a second time oblige you to remind me of what I owe you for all your motherly kindness and care!"

My heart was so full I could scarcely bring out these words, and, grown man, as I was, tears filled my eyes.

I could have told her everything; I was half in the mind, for a moment, to confess to her my love for my cousin Emma and to beg of her to influence that dear girl kindly towards me. But I said nothing. I bowed silently and retired. Going out I met Specht, but I looked another way that he might not see my agitated countenance.

Passing the open door of the dining-room I saw Emma engaged in laying the cloth for dinner. I went in, shutting the door behind me. Emma let the napkin fall which she had just taken up and I seized her hand.

"I am just come from Mrs. Stieglitz," I said, "I have been proving to her, how false are the accusations which are brought against me; yes, I have been falsely accused," repeated I, "but, Emma, you have not believed any thing bad of me, have you?"

She turned her face away and shook her head.

"Emma," I continued, "let me hold your hand for a moment, — it really and truly is not kind of you

to be always so cold and stern towards me! Why are you so?"

"I don't know," answered she, in a low voice and looked at me with tears in her large blue eyes.

"You don't know, why you torment me so?" said I, with emotion; "that is doubly unjust."

"I don't want to torment you," she replied, "but how can I be any thing but distant to you when you are become so very distant to me."

"Distant!" I repeated and let go her hand, "what do you mean by so very distant?"

"How is it possible to be otherwise," said she, sorrowfully, "you go away whenever you can, you don't trouble yourself at all about me. Oh, you are doing very, very wrong!"

She covered her face with both her hands and then continued more calmly:

"I came into this house where there was only one good, kind heart besides yours, and that is Mrs. Stieglitz. I came here without any anxiety because I thought you were here and that you would protect me as a good brother his sister."

"Yes," I interrupted her, "as a brother his sister."

"And I had not been here long before you would have nothing more to do with me. Why? I have not the least idea why!"

"Why? Emma," repeated I, with warmth. "I'll tell you why, because I loved you, and because you coldly repelled my love. Oh, you've done very wrong, you've driven me to seek for amusement out of the house, when I might have been happy and comfortable here, nay in heaven itself, if you would only have said the little word 'I love you'—or at all events have

treated me with the kindness of old times. Was that so very much to ask?" demanded I, bitterly.

A pause ensued, painful to us both and it was difficult to introduce a new subject. At length I said:

"But what did you mean by my protecting you? You, the favourite of Mrs. Stieglitz, nay the very mistress of the whole house?"

She cast an anxious glance round her, then seizing my hand violently, she whispered:

"Yes, protect me, save me from the bookkeeper."

"From the bookkeeper?" returned I, violently, "what does he want with you?"

"He persecutes me," said the poor girl, "persecutes me whenever we are alone with his attentions and his offers."

"His offers — of what?" I demanded.

"His hand!" said the poor girl, casting down her eyes and blushing with shame and indignation.

"His hand!" returned I, speaking aloud, "the hand of Mr. Specht! Oh, he can't be so absolutely stupid — the bookkeeper and you!"

"It makes me shudder," said she, fixing her innocent faithful eyes upon me, "but what am I to do? Tell me, shall I speak to Mrs. Stieglitz; but then you know what a high opinion she has of him — oh, it is very dreadful! I have, however, spoken to Doctor Burbus about it."

"Well, and what did he say?"

"He was in a regular rage," replied she, "and said that was just when he expected. Then he gave me a letter, which he said if Mr. Specht should speak of it to Mrs. Stieglitz I was to give to her."

"Give me the letter," I said, hastily.

"I would gladly do so," replied she, "because it contains a very disagreeable communication, I believe, and I don't like to have anything to do with it, but the doctor has strictly forbidden me, to give it into any other hand than hers. Now go," she said, quickly, "there is somebody coming, and think what I had best do."

"I know very well what you ought to do, and what would set every thing right," said I, passionately kissing her hand.

At this moment Specht walked in; he looked at us with a very peculiar expression.

"It is one o'clock," said he glancing to the table which was not yet laid, "dinner ought to be ready."

My anger blazed up, as I saw the hypocrite.

"Mrs. Stieglitz will excuse me," said I to Emma, "I cannot dine here to-day. And you Mr. Specht," I said, turning to him, in a tone which he could not misunderstand, "I wish you a very good appetite!"

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

The Last Carouse.

AFTER I had set myself right with Mrs. Stieglitz that lady had a conversation with Mr. Specht by which my good friend could not have been greatly edified, in so far as she communicated to him my justification as regarded the first accusation against me, when it appeared quite to have escaped his memory that the weaver Steffens had besought him to intercede with me that he might be reinstated in his employment. As far as concerned the second point the reader is

aware that it was not brought against me, indeed, had Mrs. Stieglitz introduced the subject and thus seemed to attack my honour I should have moved heaven and earth, but the bookkeeper should have cleared my character. That my cunning adversary knew perfectly well, and as he had naturally no proof against me, therefore, though deeply mortified, he let the matter rest for the present, but kept a more close watch over me than ever in order to have some well-grounded charge to bring against me. His helper in this good work was no other than that very preacher whose sermon on the Marriage Feast had so much astonished me. Young Block was my informant, indeed, I could not have had under any circumstances a more faithful and zealous friend and adherent than this young man.

I was now very circumspect in my conduct and determined to withdraw from my former companions, but at the same time to avoid any violent breach with them. This was rendered all the more easy because several others besides myself, had found it best to close this merry or foolish chapter of their lives.

Our wild-oats had been sown; had ripened and were now about to be harvested, and in the celebration of a harvest-supper, it was resolved that we should have a last meeting, and then every one turn over a new leaf. It was not wisely done; but the whole thing together was folly. The harvest-supper of my wild-oats was truly any thing but a time of merry making to me as the reader will find.

It was a Saturday evening and just as I was about to set off to my friends, I stepped into the counting-house to look over such letters, bills and other papers as yet required my attention after which to clear away

for Sunday. Specht was already gone and Block and the shop-woman were putting things to rights; she was placing the various articles straight in the glass-cases, putting away scissors, string and yard measures, he bustling about in shop and counting-house, putting aside, and rubbing down, hanging the great padlocks on the tills and whistling the while a merry tune, right glad to think that the morrow was a holiday. I had my hat on and was vexed to find a greater number of papers on my desk than usual. I went through them as quickly as possible. They were principally bills and letters which having reference to the silk-weaving department, had been left there by Mr. Specht to receive my *visa*. Lastly came an order of Mrs. Stieglitz on our banking-house, Messrs. Schilderer & Son, in which, in her usual form, she requested that the sum of five hundred thalers in treasury-notes should be paid to the bearer, and entered to her private account. Orders of this kind were common enough, and it was the custom to enter all such in a book kept by me for that especial purpose and which was from time to time inspected by her. All private cash passing through my hands, in fact, I receiving all money paid directly by the bank to us.

There was something peculiar about this order, which hurried as I was I could not but observe. The character of Mrs. Stieglitz's handwriting was boldness and freedom, this seemed less bold and free than usual, and it struck me as the first sign of decay which I had noticed in this clever, strong woman. The signature however, was in her usual style. The paper too was rather crumpled and looked old. But then I remembered that though liberal in the large she was often

niggardly in the small and in my earlier days often reproved me for wasting even half a sheet of paper. I noticed these small circumstances. Then thought no more about them — folded, directed and sealed my letters, and having finished gave them to Block who stood impatient by my side — some for the post, and some for the porter to deliver. Then taking myself the order for Schilderer & Son which I had inclosed in an envelope, went out.

Block fastened up the counting-house without a moment's delay, took his cap and ran off at full speed. This young fellow whose parents lived in the town enjoyed a great deal more liberty than I did in my young apprentice-days.

I had to call at the bank for one of my friends who was the under-cashier there, and he having been now impatiently waiting some time for me, I said when he had run his eye over the order which I gave him, —

"Never mind it now, I'll fetch the money early in the morning."

"What the deuce are you thinking of," said he, "the bank won't be open to-morrow. Take the five hundred thalers with you now. I'll give you ten fifties; they are no weight to carry, here, quick, sign me the receipt!"

"It is all one to me," returned I, took up the small roll of notes and put it in my breast-pocket.

The cashier locked the great safe, then secured the iron shutters and finally the heavy iron-plated door; trying every bolt and lock afterwards.

"I am doubly careful to-night," he said, "because the head-cashier is away for a few days and every thing depends on me. Now, every place is carefully

secured and may be left till Monday; I have the order and your receipt on the desk for entry, the first thing on Monday morning. Now let us be off. Work first and pleasure afterwards."

We went away in high spirits, for our last supper at the club, a champagne supper with all its attendant follies. Of course, head-aches and disordered stomachs and depression and anguish of mind, the moral scourging for such intemperance was sure to follow on the morrow. All knew it, but thoughtless youth defies consequences. I, however, who had very firmly resolved to free myself from such excesses and their penalties and to turn over a new leaf intended whilst I maintained good-fellowship with my friends, still to keep myself within bounds. This was the compromise which I made with my newly-awakened sense of duty, both towards myself and my employer and still more to the newly acknowledged bond between Emma and myself, although from the day when we had talked together in the dining-room, she had again apparently withdrawn herself into her former avoidance of me. Strong, therefore, in self-confidence, the weakest of all defences, I rushed like the moth into the candle and paid the penalty.

All the members of our society of fools, had like fools each a nickname. We selected at our great festivals a president who knew how to circulate the glass and by whom our ceremonies were directed. In fact, every thing was conducted on these occasions similarly to the grand commerses of the students, the whole being under the management of two or three sons of the muses who had come hither from the Uni-

versities having exchanged the *corpus juris* for the day-book and ledger.

Our supper was excellent, the bourdeaux gently warmed and the champagne ice-cold. It was not long before the brain began to be excited, I however, through half the feast maintained my self-control. At length, our president, with the tears of incipient intoxication in his eyes, drank the general health and his in return was drunk with tumultuous enthusiasm, and then the harmony of our past jovial meetings. The glasses as they were emptied were dashed against the walls and the whole became a wild orgie of drunken merriment. Here, with maudlin tears, were pledged vows of eternal friendship, which were forgotten on the morrow, there a couple of old friends quarrelled to forget all about it in equally short time. Now, the president stood aloft with a lady's slipper in his hand, challenging the whole company to a general toast "to all ladies" with a three times three; and the madness of their — nay let me say *our* folly, for I included Emma in the toast, never thinking of the humiliation and pain this must have given her had she known it, was beyond bounds.

The supper came to an end and every one dragged himself home as well as he could. Although I had exceeded the limits I had laid down for myself yet I was after all, the soberest man of the company who now after midnight turned homeward and was thus able to conduct my friend the cashier of Schilderer & Comp. not only to his own door but to help him into his bed where I left him to sleep out the heavy death-like trance of a drunken stupor.

When I woke the following morning the recollection

of the past evening lay before me like a melancholy, muddy, vilely-smelling bog scattered over with empty champagne-bottles, half-emptied plates and out of the depths of which came like the dismal croaking of frogs, the noisy, clamour of the drunkards' mirth.

My head ached, and I got up to enjoy the coldness of my chamber which seemed refreshing to my fevered blood. It was late autumn, but yet early in the morning. I looked out of my window; the sky was grey; the earth looked grey and it was steadily raining. As I stood there I could not but recall that morning of my early youth, when I drank that never-to-be-forgotten coffee in Doctor Burbus's room and looked across to my lost paradise in Reissmehl's house. I shuddered as I thought how similar was this time to that, yet how much older, wiser and more experienced I was now, how much more I had to lose, how much greater was the sin! Had I really, in any respect improved, was I wiser to know, stronger to resist temptation, now in my early manhood than when a mere boy? This reflection came like a leaden weight on my soul, and the only cheering, reassuring thought was that I, at least, had now celebrated my last festival of folly.

"Yes, yes," thought I to myself, "there's an end of all that. I draw a thick stroke under that side of the account and open a new one, a new Dr. and Cr. account; on the Dr.-side, a new, amended life, double industry, a new mode of action; on the Cr.-side I enter, the image of my Emma, her loving eyes, her influence over me for good.

"Work on, for this new entry in the ledger of life; steadily work on for a few years and then when

you strike a fresh balance you may perhaps find a considerable amount in your favour. Amen!" I added solemnly, as from the reasserting power of conscience.

I had thrown the coat which I had worn the preceding night carelessly on a chair. I now took it up intending to hang it on a peg and at that moment remembered the money which I had put into the breast-pocket. Naturally enough I felt for it. — But it was not there!

It is absolutely impossible to describe my feelings at this discovery. Various folded papers there were, for it was my habit to put all such into this side-pocket, but the five hundred thalers in treasury-notes were gone!

Most horrible miserably were my feelings! No one can conceive what they were as with a lightning-like rapidity I contemplated the consequences of this irreparable loss; irreparable in so many ways. God in Heaven! when Mrs. Stieglitz inquired for her money, and I had to confess that I had fetched it and lost it! — How lost it? At a drunken bout, the follies of which would be tenfold exaggerated when it had thus frightfully to be inquired into. To me five hundred thalers was a large sum, a considerable portion of my salary — how then could I repay it? And even if I could do so at once, it would not annul the folly which caused the loss in the first instance. Oh, fool, double dyed fool that I had been!

Then I began to think in what way possibly the money could have been lost. I had not been so far intoxicated as not to retain a recollection, more or less clear of all that occurred. True, I had never thought about the money, and consequently taken no means

for its security, from the time when I put it in my pocket, till now in my bed-room in the early morning. That it had been stolen from me I knew to be impossible, because I possessed my senses to a certain degree the whole evening, besides which my companions were all young men of honour and character. It must, therefore, be found somewhere. Who does not know how frantically one seizes hold of this indefinite *somewhere*, in the desperation of a loss like mine?

I turned the various pockets of my coat inside out; I cut the very lining from the breast, but all to no purpose. I searched my overcoat; looked every where in my room, but there was not a trace of it! Sweat-drops stood thick on my forehead, pressed out of my physical frame by the overpowering agony of my mind. Early as it was, and though nobody as yet was stirring in our house I dressed myself and hastened to the tavern where our carouse took place. A sleepy waiter opened the saloon for me, where we had banquetted a few hours before; and I seemed to behold the hideous corpse of the mad revel; a stifling atmosphere, a repulsive mingling of smells, an unsightly disorder of broken glass, empty overturned bottles, half-smoked cigars and a bewildering sense of noise and tumult, upsetting of chairs, shuffling of feet and the thick, confused utterance of drunken tongues! But it mattered not, I must search amidst all this disorder, replace every chair, remove plates and glasses, seek every where, and, in truth, it was a dismal sort of comfort to me that there was in this chaos so very much to search amongst. But I could not find that for which I sought. All my labour was in vain, my packet of bills was not there.

I next hurried to the house of my friend the under-

cashier. He, of course, was in bed, just awoke with a "splitting headache." His answers were curt and he gave me small consolation.

"Without a doubt," said he, "if you were in anything like my case, the money's clean gone. I know no more than a dog what I did last evening. I was in that state when I might have thrown our strong-box into the street; or made cigar-spills of treasury-notes. I dare say you did so with yours."

"I did nothing of the kind!" I said somewhat tartly.

"Well, now, my good fellow," said he, "do for Heaven's sake go, and leave me quiet. I am just as if I were on the rack, I can't talk to you. It's Sunday morning; I shall get right in the course of the day. Come to the bank to me to-morrow morning and we'll talk further about it."

I walked along like a drunken man; I beat my brains to remember every moment that had passed from my first receiving the money till I undressed myself for bed. Every thing was clear in my recollection, for as I have repeatedly said, I never lost command of myself, through the whole evening. On my way back I met Doctor Burbus who was returning from a night visit to a patient. He invited me to go home with him and take a glass of bitter wine, "for the re-establishment of your stomach," said he, "for you look confoundedly miserable."

I told him of our last night's farewell-carouse; at which he looked very grave. I assured him that I should never go to another.

Emma, he told me, had just called for his wife to go to morning service. I was glad of this, because

I was in no condition to meet the calm, inquiring countenance of Sybil, or to have any conversation with her. What the doctor told me, however, seemed to sound in my ear like rushing water, I was not capable of fixing my mind on anything, when he mentioned Emma's name, he looked inquiringly at me and said, laughing,

"You seem in some degree absent, my friend, else you would understand that I am speaking of some one in whom you are interested."

"Of Emma," I replied.

"Yes, certainly, I am now speaking of her," returned he, "what I mean is, that it is about time that you left Stieglitz & Comp. and took another situation, one in which you could perfect yourself in various languages and gain other important and valuable knowledge, after which you might either take the management of Mrs. Stieglitz's manufactory, or of some other similar to it. Emma during that time should live with us, which both, I and Sybil think would be much more seemly and in every way better than where she is now."

"Yes, certainly," replied I, still more absently, without really knowing what he had said, for I was thinking at that moment whether or not I should make him acquainted with my misfortune, when suddenly the idea struck me, that I had dropped the key of my chamber-door as I took it from the hook on which it always hung in a closet in the passage, and that the money might perhaps have fallen out of my pocket, whilst I was stooping for the key, which occupied some little time as I had not then lighted my candle and the lamp was out.

All at once, I seemed to feel sure that my packet must be there and seizing my hat I bade the astonished doctor a hasty good morning and rushed home.

Arrived here I opened the closet and searched every corner, but there was nothing.

It was the custom in this house that people took their time and followed their own devises and wishes on the Sunday morning. My absence from breakfast, therefore, created no surprise. The house was now silent and apparently deserted; Emma was gone with Sybil to church. Mrs. Stieglitz was probably at church also or more probably in her own room; Specht at his conventicle; young Block was not visible, and Madam Elise might be anywhere. I hastened, therefore, to my own chamber and gave myself up almost to despair. Now and then I thought I would go to Mrs. Stieglitz and tell her of my loss, which I would make good again, during the year from my own means. It would have been better if I had done so. I made the attempt two or three times; had my hand on the handle of her room-door where I ascertained she then was, but again withdrew from false shame. The thought was so inexpressibly distressing, and the fact as I saw it now so disgraceful, that I had taken her money with me to a drunken carouse and there lost it, or as she might probably suspect, gambled it away.

Then came the hour for dinner, and I took my seat at table with as much composure as I could master; Emma fortunately had not returned, she was dining at the doctor's. Block who had been reading in his chamber, saw me as I came out of mine.

"Good Heavens!" he said, "how ill you look!"

I did so, as a glance at myself in the glass had

already shown me. My distress of mind, even more than the excesses of the last evening, was very evident in my countenance.

Mrs. Stieglitz saluted me, as I entered, with her grave interrogatory:

"Eh, eh?"

Mr. Specht made a long grace and asked emphatically that we might not be "led into temptation."

In the afternoon I renewed my search. Again I went to the tavern and questioned waiters, the boots and the landlord himself. But there was no trace of it anywhere. I returned home firmly resolved to confess my misfortune to Mrs. Stieglitz, but she was gone out; I went, therefore, into my own room that I might be alone, there to await her return, which, however, would not be till late in the evening.

Evening came on; it grew dusk and I felt much calmer in the resolve to make Mrs. Stieglitz acquainted with my misfortune. I seated myself by the window, without lighting my candle to read or otherwise to occupy myself, and watched the coming and going and the life in the hotel opposite, and so from weariness and anxiety fell fast asleep.

When I again awoke the lights in the large house opposite were extinguished; every thing was still and dark, when lighting my own lamp I saw to my great dismay that it was past twelve o'clock. I had thus overslept the return of my principal, and could now do nothing better than go to bed myself. Before doing so, however, I wrote a letter to Doctor Burbus in which I told him of this unfortunate accident, asking his advice and requesting him to come here and have a talk with Mrs. Stieglitz on the subject.

By this my mind was still further relieved and no sooner was I in bed than I dropped asleep, nor did I wake till it was broad daylight and long after my usual time, even of being at business.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

A Hearing. A Rendezvous.

I do not know how much longer I should have slept had not my door opened and young Block stolen softly in and advanced to my bed-side with a disturbed expression of countenance.

"What is the matter?" exclaimed I, alarmed and at once wide awake.

The youth threw himself into a chair and fixing on me a look of tearful distress, said:

"How late you are! There's something dreadful going on downstairs. Last evening Mr. Specht had a long conversation with Mrs. Stieglitz and all so secret that Miss Emma asked me if I knew what it was about. Mrs. Stieglitz came to supper looking so solemn, and I do believe she had been crying — and I'm sure there's something dreadful up — she asked where you were and nobody could tell."

"I was here, in my own room!" interrupted I.

"Oh," said the apprentice somewhat incredulously, "but Mr. Specht said this morning at breakfast that you were again out for the whole night and never came home, and that was the second night of it."

"Then, Mr. Specht has told a lie, that's all," said I, calmly, rising and beginning to dress.

Block, however, did not go, and in the midst of

my toilet-operation seemed to turn me almost to stone by saying:

"And so as you were not down, not come back as he said, and as a remittance must go off at once to Amsterdam he went to Schilderer & Son to see after it himself and soon was back again. It's no great way, but he was in a pretty hurry and he laid a lot of papers down on the table, and while he went into the passage to spread out his wet umbrella I just took a peep at what they were."

"Well?"

"Why it was that very order that you were looking at on Saturday-night, Mrs. Stieglitz's order for five hundred thalers and your receipt for the money."

"Well," said I again, collecting myself, "and what of that? There's nothing wrong in that, as you must know. I received the money and gave the receipt. Is that such a dreadful thing?" demanded I, almost savagely and went on with my dressing.

"No, that's nothing so dreadful I know. But I'm sure there is something wrong," said the persistent lad. "I was in the counting-house all the time only they did not see me. You had left your keys in your desk."

"Good God!" exclaimed I.

"And Mrs. Stieglitz said as she looked at the order that she had never given it, 'as sure as God is in Heaven,' she said, 'I never gave that order.' Is it not a horrid thing! But you can explain it, can't you?"

"The devil!" I exclaimed, not knowing what to say or think.

The apprentice went on, apparently disappointed that I had nothing more to say.

"And so as you'd left your keys in the desk," continued he, "Mr. Specht opened it and took out the order-book, and said that it was not entered in as was regular."

"My God!" I exclaimed, almost beside myself. "I remember now that in my hurry I forgot to enter it."

"And just then," continued Block, "they saw me there, and both went into Mrs. Stieglitz's room."

My hand trembled; I pressed it to my forehead, a horrible thought flashed into my brain, "Mrs. Stieglitz did not write the letter," I said to myself, "who then did write it?"

My eye fell on the apprentice who stood as if panic-stricken. The window seemed to dance before my eyes and I caught at my breath as people do when they plunge into ice-cold water.

"Thank you," said I to the youth, "thank you heartily; do me this one more kindness, carry this letter as quick as possible to Doctor Burbus, I have asked him to come here; then one thing more; without saying anything to any one go to Schilderer & Comp. and tell the under-cashier that I have not found that which I lost; he knows what it means and beg of him for God's sake, to advise me what to do."

The apprentice hurried off to do my bidding.

I must hit upon some plan; thought I. Perhaps the under-cashier can lend me the money, or Doctor Burbus. I could not really suppose that the most horrible suspicion of all would be excited against me, that this money had been embezzled and applied to my own sinful purposes, nor would have been discovered

but for the circumspect caution of the bookkeeper. This was a frightful idea that did not occur to me at the present. Yet such was his design.

However slow I might be in finishing my toilet it was completed long before my messenger returned. He brought me, however, no consolatory news. The doctor was gone into the country and the under-cashier was so unwell as not to be able to leave his bed, and in his absence the large strong-box had not been opened and another clerk was employed to do his work.

"Keep your mind easy," wrote the under-cashier with a pencil on a slip of paper, "I shall be up by afternoon and in the bank, then I will see what can be done."

The decisive moment was come. I went slowly downstairs and direct to the room of my principal. Emma met me as I was going thither; she was very pale, and there was a sort of ghastly look in her large eyes. She wanted to stay me and speak with me; but I had not composure enough for this. I put her gently aside, for I needed my whole self-command. She hastened away and I knocked at the door of my employer.

"Come in!"

I fetched a deep breath as I entered.

She was standing, and seemed to support herself by her hand on the table. She looked at me very gravely, more sorrowfully than angry. The bookkeeper stood within the recess of the window and seemed to be looking out into the greyness of the November morning. A deep silence prevailed, which I was the first to break.

"I am greatly distressed to tell you, Mrs. Stieglitz," said I, "that a great misfortune befel me the evening before last, a very great misfortune, which, however, I hope again to make good."

She shrugged her shoulders, the bookkeeper stood unmoveable.

"The evening before last," continued I, "I received for your private account, according to your order, the sum of five hundred thalers, which sum I am extremely sorry to say that on that night I — lost."

"Lost?" repeated Mrs. Stieglitz, in a suspicious inquiry.

"Perhaps at the gaming-table?" suggested Specht, turning half round.

"Well, and that night — what?" inquired she, sternly.

"Yes, I will be candid, I was with a number of young men, acquaintance of mine. We had assembled to celebrate the breaking up of our club. It was the winding-up meeting of our somewhat foolish life. Several of us, I for one, had determined to begin an entirely new career. But either there, or in coming home, or Heaven knows how else! I lost the packet of treasury-notes which I had put in my breast-pocket."

The bookkeeper turned with a peculiar expression to our principal, who slowly and solemnly took the well-known order from the table and handing it to me inquired in a deep peculiar tone of voice which belonged alone to a deeply excited state of feeling:

"And who wrote this order?"

If young Block had not informed me that Mrs. Stieglitz had declared the order not to have been written by her I should have answered this insidious

question with much greater consternation and anger; as it was the calmness of my reply, which seemed to indicate that I was not surprised by this inquiry, excited in the mind of my noble employer the gravest suspicion. But this I was not aware of at the time. It was told to me afterwards.

"And you took it yourself to the bank and received the money?" said the bookkeeper, interrogatively.

Without giving me time to reply Mrs. Stieglitz demanded: "and why was not this order carried into my private banking-book as usual?"

"Unfortunately I forgot to do it," said I, and my anger being now excited by the scornful smile that I observed on the bookkeeper's countenance, I continued speaking in my turn with some warmth, "as I have already told you, Mrs. Stieglitz, I have had the misfortune to lose this money; but I will replace it as soon as it is in my power; and I really hoped that the misfortune of a faithful servant would not have been treated with such severity; besides which I cannot understand why Mr. Specht is to be present when my conversation concerns you, my esteemed principal alone."

"It is my desire that he should be present," returned she, adding with bitterness, "and as regards the misfortune of a *faithful* servant —"

"There is much to be thought and said," put in Mr. Specht, as if to finish her sentence.

"What do you mean, sir?" demanded I.

"I mean," returned he, coldly, "that the whole thing is very extraordinary. The letter, it appears, is a forgery. You confess, that you folded it, took it to

the bank and received the money, which has been lost, according to your own avowal, and yet it never occurs to you, until this morning, to mention it to any one, although an entire day has elapsed."

My hand shook, and it was all that I could do to control myself.

"I should most assuredly," said I, in a voice which scarcely seemed to me like my own so great was the mingled agitation of my mind, "most assuredly I should have spoken to Mrs. Stieglitz on the subject, the first thing yesterday morning but that I hoped to find the packet again, and I must confess," I again said, "that I supposed myself to be in a house where a base suspicion would not have been readily accepted against me."

"But this suspicion," said the bookkeeper, "does not appear, unfortunately to be without foundation."

"How, without foundation, sir?"

"By this very order which you —"

"Which I?"

"Yes, which you have probably written yourself."

This was too much. Mrs. Stieglitz held her handkerchief to her eyes, she was weeping. I stood a moment as if thunder-struck, then an indescribable rage took possession of my whole being, and my hand clutched at a large case-knife which lay amongst a number of miscellaneous articles on Mrs. Stieglitz's table. The bookkeeper turned white as a sheet of paper as he saw the movement of my hand towards this weapon, for it was the curious oriental knife of our late principal, which for some reason his wife still retained near her. I too, the moment I touched the

weapon let go my hold and striking my hand upon my forehead, exclaimed passionately:

"No, no! It is impossible, Mrs. Stieglitz, that you, at least, can entertain such a cruel suspicion!—You cannot, whatever this man may do! It must be a bitter jest!"

She looked at me for a moment with an expression of the deepest sorrow, then said, in a voice which seemed striving after composure:

"It is alas! no joke! A great, a terrible suspicion rests against you. You see that as the matter now stands, I cannot retain you in my service. It is, indeed, most painful, more painful than you can conceive, for I had hoped much good of you."

I could not say a word. The tone of her voice which was low and full of sorrow wrung my very heart, and for the moment overpowered the burning anger which had before consumed it. I looked at her, the remembrance of all her kindness and indulgence flashed through my mind like lightning, and forgetting the accusation I felt only affectionate reverence for her and an equally lightning-like determination to set myself right with her, come what would.

All this, however, was scarcely the work of a moment. I stood before her, as she afterwards told me, as a criminal whom she would have given half her wealth to pardon, much more to know innocent.

"Go to your friend, Doctor Burbus," she said. "Tell him to come and speak with me. We will together quietly consider what is best to be done."

So saying, she put forth her hand to indicate that I must go and I full of the sentiment I have just mentioned, seized it with a passionate emotion, nor did she

withdraw it. I felt as if I were just about to lose a mother, I kissed her hand, and am not ashamed to confess that no longer able to control myself I burst into tears and rushed from the room.

The kind-hearted and noble woman dropped, as it were, into her chair, saying to the bookkeeper almost sternly:

"Go — I wish to be alone!"

And as she herself said afterwards wept bitterly, praying God that if my innocence could not be proved yet that this one fatal error, which she determined should not be made public, might, as a warning save me from any future degradation and sin.

The state of mind in which I now was it is impossible to describe. Seizing my hat I went out of the house walking quietly, but with a tumult of emotion within. The cold November air which I inhaled in great gulps seemed to do me good, and as I went on I quickened my pace along the well-known streets on my way to the doctor's. The nearer I came, however, the more difficult seemed the task before me and again I slackened my pace, my whole senses occupied on myself, hence it was that as I turned up to the doctor's door I ran directly between the heads of a pair of horses, at the same moment the deep voice of my friend, who had just then returned from the country, exclaimed:

"What in the devil's name, are you after? Is not that delirium over yet?"

I looked up at once, and he thus seeing my countenance, knew that something dreadful had occurred and without saying another word took me by the arm and led me into his private room. I seated myself

and stared at the wall like one quite stupified, as really was the case. Burbus reared his whip in a corner, threw off his hat, over-coat and gloves, and then seating himself in a chair just before me, said:

"I can see plain enough that here are many things out of order. What's amiss? Come, tell me at once," added he, urgently, seeing that I remained silent. "Out with it! — even if it's something devilishly bad, — out with it!"

"It *is* devilishly bad, it's most horrible!" I said. "But, dear doctor, I'll tell you all."

And I now told him every thing, from beginning to end, that is to say from the time when I took the order from my desk, folded and enclosed it in an envelope, to the last half hour, when I was brought up to that dreadful hearing.

The doctor was evidently greatly perplexed. He walked up and down the room, with his hands behind him, as was his custom; stopping every now and then before me and looking me fixedly in the face.

"That is the whole story," said I, when I had finished, "and I really cannot understand about that cursed order."

"No, certainly not," said he, and again looked fixedly and solemnly at me.

"Certainly not!" repeated I. "By God, I am innocent of the whole affair, perhaps with the exception of not having taken sufficient care of the money."

Again the doctor stood before me and fixed upon me a firm, searching look as if to penetrate to my very inmost being.

I met his gaze calmly and again assured him that the whole thing was precisely as I had told him.

I give you my word of honour," I said, "nay, I swear by my heart's deep love for Emma, that I have told you the whole truth and have concealed nothing."

"Then it's all right," returned the doctor, rubbing his forehead as if to clear his brain, "that Mr. Specht is at the bottom of it. It is perfectly clear to me, that he has either written the letter himself or has had it written. Besides the whole thing is so clumsily done, that it is quite worthy of the intellect of this man and his precious friend the preacher; I say the whole is so shallow that it would be quite laughable if there were not a good deal of folly on your side, and a concurrence of circumstances which have helped these rascals. Why, for instance, didn't you enter the order at once in the order-book, as was your duty? why did you lose the money when you'd got it? and why when it was lost did not you, as soon as you had discovered it, make it known to your employer? It would have been different if you had done so, and," added he, still more earnestly, "why did you keep your mouth shut about it, when you were here, at noon yesterday? That was a want of confidence in me that deserves punishment."

I explained to him my state of mind on the preceding day; my distress at having lost the money and the hope that I might find it, besides which I assured him that I had at that time gone to him with the intention of telling him every thing, but when it came to doing so I was not able to say a word."

"Reproaches do no good," said the doctor, "so now we must think what is to be done. Were you going any where this morning? Have you any hope of finding the money again?"

"No," I returned, "I have no longer any hope of that kind. I am only going to my friend, the under-cashier at Messrs. Schilderer & Son, who this morning was still in bed —"

"To get the money from him," interrupted the doctor, impatiently, "what folly! As if one of your brother-scape-graces could lend you five hundred thalers! But the money is the least part of the business. Now, hear my advice. Go quietly home. Keep in your own room and make no attempt to prove your innocence. As Mrs. Stieglitz wishes to see me, I will go to her in the course of the day; before that, however, I will call at Messrs. Schilderer & Son to have a talk with the head of the firm, whose physician and friend I am. I will also request to see some letters of Mr. Specht's; I don't think any harm will come of studying the handwriting of this gentleman a little. Now go! I shall not say anything about this business to Sybil, till it is cleared up, as, I trust to God, it will be shortly."

I left the doctor, went home, and up into my own chamber without being seen by any of the family. I locked the door and began anew to search; but to no purpose; I took out all my letters and papers, intending to occupy my time in looking them through and arranging them. When dinner was ready some one knocked at my door, but as I returned no answer and no one had seen me enter the house, it was supposed that I was absent.

Hour after hour went on and it was unspeakably tedious to me. I heard the quarters and the whole hour strike; then it began to grow dusk. My one wish was that the doctor would come, I took my stand,

therefore, by the window and looked into the street anxiously hoping that every man who approached might be he. Then I left the window and listened at the door if any one were coming up the stairs, for the doctor might come along our side of the street and so enter the house unseen by me. Vain hope! All was still as death in the house: not a step on the stairs was audible. But now, *crash!* some one is coming up. I know not why at that moment I went away from the door, and seated myself on my trunk which stood in a kind of recess between my wardrobe and my bed. Without my being seen, I had a view of the door through the large looking-glass which hung on the wall. A ray of light flashed through the key-hole, a pass-key was inserted, the door opened slowly and the bookkeeper put his head into the room, and looked round hastily to see if I were there. At the first moment my impulse was to start forward, drag him into the room and wring from him by force, the confession that he had defamed me. My second thought was to remain still. I did so and the door was again closed.

Shortly after this I again heard steps on the stairs. Not the doctor, much lighter and ascending still higher, it was Emma, who wishing, probably, to be alone, now sought retirement in the unfrequented sitting-room. As I have already said this room adjoined mine, was, in fact, divided from it by only a thin wooden partition, and a door opened between the two rooms which, however, was always kept locked, although I had the key and might have used it, but that a table, or some other piece of furniture was placed against it on the sitting-room side. My first impulse now was to unlock the door, enter and thus give the dear girl an ex-

planation of my misfortune. But whilst I was hesitating, whether or not to turn the key, on which my hand was already placed I heard the door of the room open softly from the passage.

"I wish to be here alone," I heard her say, as the door was closed behind the person who had evidently entered and who was Mr. Specht as I perceived the next moment to my chagrin:

"But I must speak a word or two with you, Miss Emma."

"I came here to be alone," she replied.

"You must pardon my intrusion," returned he, "but I wish to say something to you about your cousin."

"About my cousin?"

"Yes, Miss Emma. You are aware in what a painful position he has placed himself, the consequence, I am afraid of this thoughtless folly, and which would have the most fatal effect upon his future career in life, if it became publicly known, as well as being most painful, if not disgraceful to his family and friends."

"As far as they are concerned, you may make yourself easy," she returned proudly; "for you have not the honour of belonging either to the one or the other!"

"You do me injustice, my dear Miss Emma," he said, "I have a great interest in the young man, and have done my part to lead him aright; but he broke loose from my guidance, nevertheless I sincerely wish him well; I take the greatest interest in his well-being and for that reason I have now ventured to intrude upon

you; that I may consult with you as what we can best do to free him from his present most painful position."

"*Well?*" repeated she, with a painful emphasis. "I can, Heaven knows, do nothing, but if you Mr. Specht, have it in your power to establish his innocence, I beseech of you to do it, and you will have my very best thanks!"

"*Thanks?*" repeated he, "well, that would be something. But I can assure you that appearances are so much against him that it would be difficult in any court of justice to prove him innocent."

"But you yourself think him innocent?" she said.

"Every circumstance is most decidedly against him," he again urged.

"But if you do not think him innocent," exclaimed she, with an agitated voice, "why then do you come to me?"

"Because, my dear Miss Emma, I can see one way by which I could help him."

"Could establish his innocence?" asked she, eagerly.

"Yes, at least, before the world and perhaps in the eyes of Mrs. Stieglitz, by some little sacrifice of my own."

"I do not understand you," Emma replied, "but if you can prove him to be innocent, as I believe him to be, then I beseech of you to do so, and may God reward you!"

"The reward of God is that after which we must ever strive," said the hypocrite, "but in this case I may be permitted to look to a reward nearer earth. Do you not understand me, Miss Emma?"

was silent and he continued:

is not the first time, Miss Emma, that I have

spoken to you on this subject. Let me speak of it now. I do not come to you empty-handed. With one hand I offer you wealth, and an honourable name, with the other the innocence of your cousin, that is to say," added he after a pause, "so far as to remove from him any consequences of his guilt, and on condition of his leaving this house with an unstained reputation, you understand."

I stood listening at the door all this time, with a strange tumult of feeling which I could hardly control, and now I waited breathlessly for Emma's reply.

A long pause ensued; then the bookkeeper began again.

"I am not unreasonable, Miss Emma; I will give you till to-morrow morning to decide. Early in the morning, before breakfast I will come here for your reply."

"Why so early," answered she. "Do you mean anything particular by speaking of *early*?"

"Because," returned he, "Mrs. Stieglitz will most probably bring the matter before the criminal-court in the morning."

"The criminal-court!" exclaimed Emma, and these two words sounded like a loud cry of woe.

I gnashed my teeth, and could hardly prevent myself from rushing into the room, I should have done so had not the low-spoken question of Emma made me pause in curiosity.

"But tell me, sir," she said, "what are the means by which you would prove him innocent, of which you spoke just now?"

It was a moment or two before the bookkeeper replied; then speaking slowly, he said:

"Understand me, Miss Emma, I did not say I could *prove* him innocent, but make him appear so. By God, I believe him guilty, guilty of writing the order himself; he is addicted to gambling — pardon me, my dear Miss Emma, but I am forced to speak plain, the gambler can set no bounds to his sin. He wanted money and money he must have. This he obtained by the false order which he himself drew — the confidence that was placed in him, made this easy. He took the five hundred thalers with him to his card-playing, drinking carouse and — lost them! It was but the natural consequence. The penalty of sin, Miss Emma, is death. Here then is the death of good name, honour, reputation — every thing!" —

A pause ensued. Emma said not a word. I fancied I could hear her breath drawn in stifling sobs. I wonder I did not burst in. But strange curiosity to hear all that this designing man had to say restrained me, though the sweat-drops burst from my forehead.

Again he went on, "This I believe, before God, to be the truth, but whether it be the first sin of this kind or not I presume not to say. Judge not, says the Scriptures, that ye be not judged, and I will not go beyond the undoubted facts of the present moment."

Still Emma said nothing, and he continued:

"Now listen. It has occurred to me that there is a means by which I can clear your cousin of that which, in the eye of the law, and in the understanding of the employer and the employed, is certainly the worst part of his crime, I mean the forging the order, which is principal. I can, I say, give him the benefit of the doubt, in so far that I can suggest whether this order is not *bona fide* in the hand of Mrs. Stieglitz

given, but for some reason not presented, for singularly enough I observe that it is without a date, and the paper is not fresh. It is possible, therefore, I say, and the court if it were carried into a court, would accept this suggestion from me as sufficient to clear him of this portion of the charge, it is possible, I say, that the order is genuine. As to the money itself, that could be found, if it were needful."

"Found?" exclaimed Emma, "then you know where it is!"

"Understand me," returned he, "that money, the five hundred thalers which he fetched from the bank, are gone, he best knows how, and will never be forth coming. But they are not the only five hundred thalers in the world. It is a considerable sum, Miss Emma, but if you say the word they shall be found. I should think it a small sacrifice for the winning of this — dear hand!"

"Let go my hand!" exclaimed Emma.

"Reflect Miss Emma! You can save your cousin from disgrace, from ruin, if you choose. It all depends on you."

"No, no!" exclaimed she, bursting into tears. "My cousin is innocent. I know he is! And God in Heaven will prove him so. Why do you tempt me! You have been a torment to me for so long, and now you are so cruel!"

"Why cannot you regard me, as an angel sent by God to save your cousin from disgrace. Say only, *yes*, and it shall be done. The money is ready, and, I will obtain another situation, better, perhaps, than this, for your cousin. Say, *yes*, — Emma, you do not know. I love you passionately, better than my own

life. I will make you rich beyond what you have any conception of, I will save your cousin, if you will only look favourably on my love!"

"If you are a man, if you have the heart of a man in you!" said she, still weeping, "save my cousin, for the mercy and love of God and not for reward, oh, he is still young and his life all before him!"

"Emma," he exclaimed, now seeming to lose all command of himself, "you love this gambler, this licentious young man, this forger of his employer's signature, this embezzler of his employer's money! By God, you shall not be his. He shall be dragged as a criminal before the judge, he shall pay the full penalty of his sin by a felon's sentence!"

I heard a cry from Emma as if her heart were breaking, and bursting open the door and overturning the table that stood against it, I rushed into the room. Emma looked round for a moment in terror, and then sprang to my side, I caught her in my arms, kissed her passionately, set her in a chair and then rushed upon the bookkeeper who stood as if paralysed in the middle of the room and what would have been the consequence I cannot say but that at that moment the door opened and Mrs. Stieglitz stood before us. The noise of the falling table had resounded through the house and brought her here.

She came forward a step or two and drawing up her majestic figure to its full height and with stern severity on her countenance looked almost terrible. Her eye was fixed on me and seemed to flash lightning, her lips moved but she did not speak.

On her entrance I had let go my hold on the book-

keeper and he, at once, controlling himself and assuming his hypocritical mien, said:

"You have, my worthy principal, been sent, to save me from the violence of this man. He is ready I verily believe, to commit murder!"

Emma had risen from her chair, and I put my arm round her waist, as if to support her. It was all done in a moment. Mrs. Stieglitz was evidently extremely angry; she saw the open door between the two rooms. Here again was another of my misdeemeanours.

Emma, however, rushed away, as if possessed by terror or some new idea; Mrs. Stieglitz said not a word to me. She was too angry to trust herself to speak; and turning round went slowly out of the room.

Emma rushed away to her own chamber, and then suddenly remembering the sealed envelope which had been given her by Doctor Burbus, took it downstairs, and praying that God would help us both in this terrible trial put it into the hands of Mrs. Stieglitz.

Specht and I remained in the room, standing face to face, each hating the other with a deadly hatred, and ready to fall on each other, for a mortal struggle. But this was only for a second or two, he stepped slowly backwards, without taking his eye from me, I kept mine upon him; so he retired to the door and then sprang at a bound into his own room, the door of which he locked.

CHAPTER XL.

A Second Hearing.

I FOLLOWED Specht to the door of his chamber. I was unspeakably agitated by contending emotions. Terrible as was the picture which he had drawn of my supposed guilt and the character which I knew it might assume in the eyes of the world, yet this was nullified in some degree by the conviction that Emma believed me innocent.

Innocent I was of the crimes which this deadly enemy charged against me yet I felt less outraged by this charge than by his attempt to win Emma from me. She was true to me and I was conscious of a power of patience and endurance such as I could not have supposed myself capable of. However great my folly had been I was innocent of crime. Emma believed me so and I would wait patiently till events proved me really so. Again I bethought myself of the promised visit of Dr. Burbus. Had he been and was gone again, and had he brought no deliverance, no hope for me? I stood on the landing and looked down the broad, deep staircase into the dark storeys below. A ray of light shot from the kitchen where I heard the maid-servants talking and the voice of young Block inquiring for the bookkeeper. Who could have believed that so much perplexity and sorrow would have arisen for me in this quiet family? I went involuntarily step by step down the higher flight to the landing below where a long passage led to the weighing-room and where also the chamber and private

sitting-room of Mrs. Stieglitz were situated. An ante-room led to the latter; the door stood open and a light shone into it from the inner room but all was still as death.

I quietly retraced my steps to my own room determining to wait there according to the advice of my friend Dr. Burbus, who I felt convinced had not yet been, and till I was summoned thence by him.

In the meantime could I have looked into those silent rooms, I should have seen, as I afterwards was told; the elderly woman sitting in her arm-chair, erect and stern and on a low stool at her feet my cousin Emma resting her head on her old friend's knee, the convulsive movement of the body showing that she wept bitterly. Mrs. Stieglitz in the meantime was reading a letter, which for the sake of better light she held behind one of the candles on the table before her. Her features were set with a rigid sternness which seemed to deepen as she read; her other hand rested on the fair hair of the girl whom she seemed to press tenderly to her. When she had read the letter she dropped it on the table then with her head bowed, sat silent.

Emma looked up for some time also without speaking, then said:

"Is he not a wicked man?"

"When did Doctor Burbus give you this letter?" asked Mrs. Stieglitz.

"Not very long after I came here."

"Just so," returned she, "that was about four weeks after this unfortunate Therese left. Oh, it is horrible, perfectly horrible!"

"Pardon me asking you a question, dear Mrs.

Stieglitz," began the poor girl, again bursting into tears, "but you really do not think — do you? — of bringing this sad business of my cousin into court as the bookkeeper threatens?"

"God forbid!" said the elderly lady. "I should not have done that even if the young man had not had so warm an advocate as you, my dear child! You are quite convinced, are you? that your cousin is innocent?"

The girl rose from her seat and raising her right hand, said solemnly:

"As firmly as I believe on God and that we must give an account for all the evil that we do or think, so firmly do I believe that of whatever folly he may have been guilty, yet that he is innocent of this great sin."

"Ay, ay, girl!" said Mrs. Stieglitz, and kissed her on the forehead; "you are a zealous defender, and take an immense interest in your cousin, a warmer interest I imagine than merely relationship warrants."

A silence ensued, Emma laid her face on the hand of this worthy lady, then again looked up and said in a low timid voice:

"Why should I have a secret from you, who wish me so well, and love me as a mother. Yes, it is more than mere relationship! Forgive me, nobody knows. God only knows it. I do love my cousin better than all else in the world; I would give up every thing for him — and most of all when he is so unhappy, and such a dreadful suspicion has fallen upon him — and yet I know he is innocent!"

Mrs. Stieglitz looked fixedly for a moment at the

speaker, then laid both her hands on her head and said solemnly, looking upwards:

"God bless you, my child. I trust that light from above may be vouchsafed to us, and that this young man may be cleared of this terrible suspicion!"

All this time I had been like an uneasy ghost, wandering from point to point, listening with an impatience which had become uncontrollable for the arrival of my friend Burbus. Again I had silently descended the stairs and stood on this lower landing near the yet open door of the ante-room which, however, now was dark, for the inner door was closed. My heart beat and my pulses throbbed in a feverish tumult of impatience, when all at once a hand was laid on my shoulder and Doctor Burbus who had ascended from below unperceived by me, said:

"Listeners never hear any good of themselves."

"I am not listening, Heaven knows," said I, "I am only waiting for you."

"Well, we must see what's to be done," said he. "But the truth is I know no more now than we did in the morning. You remain quietly in the ante-room," added he, "whilst I go in. There are no secrets to be discussed and you may be wanted. I, who know that hypocrite Specht, better in some respects than you do am determined to turn the tables against him, even if we cannot clear you from all the mischief you have brought on yourself by your confounded folly."

The doctor entered and was received very kindly by Mrs. Stieglitz. He took a chair near the door and I heard all that went forward. Emma had risen from her low seat at her aged friend's knee and now taking

up her needlework and one of the candles, seated herself at a table on the other side of the room.

"Very extraordinary and painful events have occurred here to-day," Mrs. Stieglitz said, "as you probably know. Events which have greatly distressed me. But in the first place, doctor, I wish to know, where is that poor girl, Therese?" she made this inquiry in a low voice.

The doctor answered in the same tone; that she had got through her troubles pretty well, and was not badly off.

"And do you believe that the statement she has made in this letter," said she, pointing to the one on the table, "is really true. Has the bookkeeper behaved as basely to her as she says?"

"Without doubt," returned he. "What, indeed, could she get, by telling a lie? Besides I have seen letters from Mr. Specht to her which leave no doubt possible."

"God help her, poor soul!" sighed Mrs. Stieglitz. "She was at heart a really good girl. I am very sorry for her.

"But now, doctor, to the other business. You know, I believe, how the whole thing stands. What had we better do now?—or what steps can we take to bring the truth to light?"

The doctor shrugged his shoulders, propped his chin upon his stick,—a favourite attitude with all physicians—and replied:

"You must pardon my plain speaking, madam, but we have to deal with a double-dyed scoundrel—I don't mean my young, foolish friend—but that other, of whom we have just been speaking."

"My bookkeeper Specht, again!" exclaimed Mrs. Stieglitz.

"The same;" said the doctor, "and I have not the shadow of a doubt in my mind but that the letter to the banking-house is a purposed forgery, to bring our young friend into trouble. It is perfectly clear to me — yet it will be difficult to prove."

The sound of carriage-wheels and the clatter of horses' hoofs were heard to pull up on the paved road before our house; a second or two afterwards Block sprang into the room announcing the counsellor-of-commerce Schilderer who desired to speak with Mrs. Stieglitz.

This gentleman was a man of great influence and importance in the commercial world. As head of the first banking-house in that part of the country, he had the weal and woe of a great number of trades-people in his hand, and as he was also president of the board-of-trade and of the criminal-court, the fate of thousands of artisans depended upon him, at the same time that he was honoured, loved and feared as a just and impartial judge.

Stern and unrelenting in business, he was in ordinary life kind and beneficent, assisted the oppressed and was ready to do good at the right time. In person he was tall and thin, courtly in manner and somewhat elaborate and studied in dress. He wore the whitest and freshest of cravats and in the button-hole of his fine, black broad-cloth-coat the coloured ribbon of an order.

Thus magnificent in outward attire and inward consciousness of wealth and influence, the dignified banker slowly ascended the stairs. Young Block stood in the ante-room and assisted him to take off his over-coat,

which he received in charge. I, who still remained in the dimly lighted ante-room, was not noticed by the banker, until, attracted by an irresistible impulse having followed him into the room, he turned round and held up his finger threateningly at me, yet with no unfriendliness of countenance. By this I instantly concluded that my miserable affairs were about to take a favourable turn, and my principal, on her part, shewing no displeasure at my presence I took it for granted that I had her permission to remain.

"Good evening, Madam Stieglitz! Good evening, doctor!" The banker had said on entering, and then seated himself on the chair which the latter shoved forward for him.

"You will be surprised to see me here so late, Madam," said he, now gravely addressing Mrs. Stieglitz; "but our friend, Doctor Burbus, has mentioned to me, in confidence, of course, a circumstance which, as I know that young scape-grace," said he, pointing backwards with his thumb to where I stood, "I am extremely sorry to hear. My cashier, a very useful and trustworthy young man in his business, but out of it, like our friend, I am afraid, somewhat too fond of pleasure, came this evening, after you had left, doctor, — all the worse for the blue-devils — pardon the expression, Madam, — to which he had opened the door on Saturday night, he came creeping into the bank, to attend to one or two things that could not be deferred and unlocking the safe, which he had fastened on Saturday evening — for I do not allow my clerks, excepting in cases of the utmost necessity, to interfere with the cashier's business, — what would you believe! — there was the entical packet, with the five hundred thalers in trea-

surey-notes, about which there is all this commotion! Here it is safe and sound!" said he, producing it.

"Thank God!" I exclaimed, unable to control myself and rushing forward to the banker, received the lost money with trembling hands.

"Those foolish young men," continued he almost sternly, "were thinking more of their pleasure than of their business and instead of taking away the packet left it behind them!"

The doctor put forth his hand kindly to me; Mrs. Stieglitz nodded with a half smile and I heard a suppressed cry of joy from the little table at the other side of the room.

"It now seems to me most advisable," said Mr. Schilderer, "addressing Mrs. Stieglitz, that your bookkeeper, Mr. Specht, should be sent for, that he may withdraw the serious accusation which he has made against your junior clerk in so far, at least, as regards the embezzlement of the money."

"Yes, yes!" replied she and pulled the cord of the bell which rang into the counting-house. Young Block in answer, making his appearance was ordered to summon the bookkeeper.

Mr. Specht made his appearance in a few minutes, he looked pale and the tone in which he said good evening was less assured than usual.

I was very much more calm on this second hearing than I had been on the first, and now with a feeling of propriety withdrew into the ante-room that the doctor might have perfect freedom to put his questions to the bookkeeper.

A thousand joyful emotions overwhelmed me. I seemed to be repeating the name of Emma over and

over again in the inmost of my heart, each time more passionately than before. I was cleared from the black suspicion which had stood against me, and now my amended life should be devoted to the winning of Emma's love, and proving myself worthy of the confidence of my principal. But I was still desperately anxious to know how the mystery regarding the spurious letter would be cleared up. That the signature if not genuine, was a most accurate forgery or imitation I could not deny. I stood, therefore, thinking how it could possibly be — when all at once a thought suggested itself — a terrible thought for me, yet still probably correct enough to clear up many other things. Yes, it really must be so!

Again I went into the room. The doctor was just saying:

"You now see plainly, Mr. Specht, that your colleague did not obtain this money for his own improper use. When people want money for such purposes they do not leave it carelessly behind them. Tell us now, sir, your opinion candidly. How do you think this letter or order could possibly find its way to your junior's desk? Is there any one about the place capable of forging or imitating the signature of your principal?"

The bookkeeper shrugged his shoulders and remained silent. I stepped forward to the table, and ply to the doctor's inquiry, said:

"I believe that I know who wrote that signature, I believe I know also who wrote the order above which was laid upon my desk with other papers requiring my attention."

All eyes were fixed in amaze upon me, and the bookkeeper seemed to shrink under my eye, as I fixed my glance firmly upon him, yet the amaze was changed into dismay, as I continued calmly: "I wrote the signature, yes, I myself wrote it, and in your presence, Mr. Specht!"

His look of triumph was gone at once and he stammered "in my presence!"

"Yes, sir, in your presence. Don't you remember one evening, when we were speaking of the signature of our principal, that you said it would be a most difficult hand to imitate; but that you thought my handwriting resembled hers and suggested that for curiosity I should try to imitate it; I did so and after various attempts, produced one which you pronounced perfect."

"That is a most hateful, abominable invention!" exclaimed the bookkeeper, "so true as God is in Heaven, a wicked lie!"

"If that could be proved," said the counsellor of trade and commerce, "a great step would be gained!"

"Proof! Let's have proof in Heaven's name!" said the doctor.

"The paper, with this signature," continued I, "is now lying on the table; I know it again. Mr. Specht, after he had said it was well done placed it with other papers — some of them being the very attempts I had just been making — into a green morocco writing-case with a steel-lock which he used and still uses for his own private affairs. It is just possible that if that writing-case were searched some of those unsuccessful attempts might be found amongst its contents.

"Of course, of course!" said the doctor.

"Oh, I can show you this writing-case," said the bookkeeper hastily; "I'll fetch it this minute."

He was hurrying away when the banker stopped him.

"I am sure, Mr. Specht," he said, "you wish every thing to be done in the most straight-forward way possible; you can have no other desire, and without wishing to cast any suspicion upon you, you would I am sure have no objection to Doctor Burbus accompanying you to your room. The matter is very serious and involves the character and honour of others besides yourself."

"Most, certainly, I will attend him," said the doctor rising, Mrs. Stieglitz, however, held him back by the arm, saying:

"Pardon me, gentlemen, I am perfectly of your opinion. But I think it would be better for me to accompany my bookkeeper. He will not, I am convinced have any secrets with me, regarding the contents of his writing-case."

The bookkeeper was evidently appalled by this proposal. His countenance became still more lividly pale and he stood as if rivetted to the spot. It was pitiable to see him.

Mrs. Stieglitz took up a candle and saying, with that air of command which was so natural to her, "come with me, Mr. Specht," walked out of the room he followed her.

Ve waited in excited expectation, but not a word said. A strange uncomfortable sense of something ole being at hand seemed to suppress all desire for versation, and the momentousness of the search now nng forward prevented all triumph on my part. The

doctor told me afterwards that he knew how it would end from the beginning. What the banker felt, I knew not; but he looked very grave and dignified, as he might have done as president of the criminal-court.

After some time we heard the firm step of the head of the firm, slowly coming downstairs; every step seemed to go to my heart till I felt as if I could hardly breathe; perhaps, he had destroyed every scrap of paper, and nothing would be found to strengthen my accusation. She might have been absent a full quarter of an hour. Emma told me afterwards that she sat at her little table, praying with all her might that God would make all clear in my favour.

At length, the old lady returned and every one could see, by the effort she made even to hold the candle steady, how much she was agitated. She brought with her, as I hoped might be the case, several pieces of paper which she threw upon the table. Although she was evidently so much agitated, and though her grave countenance was almost deathly pale, she went round to her chair with a firm step. But when she was seated she so placed the candle-screen as to throw its shade upon her countenance.

"The whole matter is decided," she said, "my late bookkeeper, Mr. Specht, has fully confessed the truth as you," said she, turning to me, "stated it. He has also confessed to having falsely accused you, wilfully!

"Mr. Specht will leave my house in the morning," resumed she, after a momentary pause, which no one had broken. "You," said she, again addressing me, "are clear of the suspicion which rested against you, perfectly clear and I candidly acknowledge, both to the gentlemen now present, and to yourself, that I am

extremely sorry to have judged you unjustly. Give me your hand, and let me assure you, before these gentlemen of my fully restored esteem. You have been a good and faithful servant, and now abandoning the follies into which you have lately fallen, and which sooner or later must bring their punishment, let your life continue to be one of sacred integrity, as it will be of increasing trust."

"Amen," said the minister of trade and commerce, rising from his seat. "And now, young man," added he, addressing me, in his turn, "let me tell you, that you have in great measure deserved this punishment. You have for some time been leading a dissolute life and it is no excuse to you, though it is a fortunate circumstance, that you left the money which had been given to you from my bank, carelessly lying there!"

"Yes, yes, young manufacturer," continued the doctor, "and if by chance you had lost the money in the street, your innocence would not have been so readily established. Let this be a great lesson to you!"

I heartily thanked the minister of trade and commerce, for his kindness and his good advice. Young Block helped him on with his over-coat and received also a few words of friendly admonition. The carriage rolled away from the door and the doctor taking up his hat, said:

"I must go home and tell my wife how happily this affair has ended. She has been very unhappy about this foolish young man!" and bidding Mrs. Stieglitz a cordial good night, he left the room, I accompanying him. But he would not let me go farther than the door.

"I leave you here," he said in an under voice, "in

the best of company. Come to us to-morrow and tell us any thing more that may have happened. Good night."

He went, and young Block to whom our principal had given a free evening, went out at the same time also, and as I learnt next morning was taken by the doctor to his house, who in the joy of his heart made a merry little supper for the youth, and so delighted him beyond measure.

I remained alone with Mrs. Stieglitz and Emma. Emma as soon as the gentlemen were out of room had sprung forward to her aged friend and again sitting down at her knee buried her face and wept tears of joy. I too went up to her and thanked her heartily for her kindness and for the words of encouragement which she had spoken to me.

"My children," she said, "and as she so began to speak she gave me her right hand and laid her left on the head of Emma, "my children, God has placed you in my hands. He has now set all things straight. You love one another; this is a great satisfaction to me and I shall provide for you. I have no near relations in the world; you also stand very nearly alone. I think we may spend our days happily together. I will be a mother to you—you shall be my children—yes, my children with such advantages as I can give you."

What a blissful moment that was! It is impossible for me to describe what we both felt. Such of my readers as have experienced any thing like it, may recall their own emotions, those who have not, need only imagine the greatest bliss which this world could offer them.

"Now leave me, my children," she said after a

long pause, she no longer our principal, now our mother, "go, it is getting late, and I feel very much upset."

Emma and I parted for the night in the ante-room, and I must confess that the kiss which I then received from my betrothed was worth all those which I had received in former days from my cousin.

CHAPTER XLI.

The End.

THE following morning the bookkeeper left the house, but not without an attempt on the part of his clerical friend to induce Mrs. Stieglitz to be more lenient in her judgment towards him. But though the interview lasted a considerable time, it produced no effect on her decision and he left the house with a countenance in which his usual self-complacency was considerably abated.

As for Mr. Specht I never saw him again, till many years had passed when he appealed to me for help in the most abject depths of poverty. But that event belongs to a different portion of my life, with which I have now nothing to do.

But to return to the dawn of my great prosperity. The doctor rejoiced with all his heart over my good une, and had that same day a long conversation

Mrs. Stieglitz, the result of which was that I ; well provided with letters of introduction and t, should spend a year in making myself thoroughly acquainted with the silk-manufactories of the South of that the head of the firm would in the mean-

time dispose of the retail-business, the proceeds of which should be applied to the extension of the manufacturing-department on my return.

She retained the income of her large private property which was deposited in the public funds, for her own use during her life. She also made her will at this time and the doctor who was one of the witnesses thereto, said to me: "I assure you, you are provided for a great deal better than you deserve."

This good and wealthy woman had nominated Emma and myself as her heirs, under two conditions; the one being that the funds of the house of Stieglitz & Comp. of Amsterdam should remain in the business for the benefit of the distant relative who was the manager there; the second that we should not come into possession of the remainder of the property until the manufacturing-business had been so far improved by my industry and management as to produce a clear yearly return which she named and which was considerably higher than it had ever yet produced, unforeseen and unavoidable misfortunes excepted. But there was no doubt considering the large capital which the disposal of the retail-business would throw into the concern that it would in a few years become one of the best and most important silk-manufactories of the country.

Shortly after all this was settled I set off on my new destination. It was a bright, cold winter-evening, and after having taken an affectionate leave of my second mother and my beloved Emma went to the posthouse, accompanied by Doctor Burbus, after I had, as a matter of course, been commissioned with a thousand greetings from Sybil to the various members of the family, whom I should see in the course of a few

days. Young Block went with me also to look after my portmanteau; and once again I was standing in the yard of the post, just as on that never-to-be-forgotten evening when Doctor Burbus arrived and so commenced my journey in the same diligence, by which the old, fat and polite gentleman in the grey travelling-cap then pursued his.

The doctor placed a small sum of money in my hand to pay some of his debts in B.

"Don't forget," said he, laughing, "to pay a visit to my former landlady and you can go and see whether the fresco-paintings still remain on the walls of my room. Apropos of my room, don't forget my compliments to Miss Barbara, now Mrs. Phillip, and if my skeleton is still in their possession you can purchase it for me, at any price."

"Good bye! A good journey to you! *au revoir!*"

The diligence posted away and by day-break I was only a mile distant from the mill. It was very nearly at the same hour as on the morning when I left, that I again stood by the old cross, and bright and clear as my future was now the view that expanded before me into the deep valley. No melancholy mist-cloud now obscured it; all was festally attired in the white winter-garment of snow. I could see the pleasant, friendly mill through the leafless branches of the trees, and the columns of blue smoke ascending from the chimneys and taking a golden-tint in the first beams of the morning-sun which was now rising above the surrounding hills. The water raged over the swollen weir; the mill-wheel turned merrily and rapidly, as if it would make itself warm this cold morning, and so doing snapped off the beautiful icicles which had

been formed during the night and scattered them like a thousand diamonds in the clear air.

No sooner had I reached the fence that inclosed the mill-court than I saw cousin Christopher in the act of harnessing his strong horse into his sledge. The next minute all were out delighted to see me again. The miller's wife had so much to ask me about her daughter Mrs. Burbus, and every thing I had to tell her was of the most satisfactory kind. Elsbeth was still unmarried; Caspar had a little group of children to show; but unfortunately I did not see the good Francis who was out in the fields.

I stayed an hour with my friends, a short hour in which a great deal had to be said on both sides, after which I accompanied cousin Christopher in his sledge and with arrow-like speed we flew over the smooth snow-covered plain to B. We passed through all the old places where Doctor Burbus and I had rested on our pedestrian-journey to the mill; rested for half an hour at the inn where he played off his jokes on the Gensd'armerie and reached the town late in the afternoon. It was dusk when I entered the room of my grandmother.

The joy of the old lady was indescribable when she beheld me, now a tall young man, handsomely dressed, no longer the meagre undersized being who had formerly been, in her eyes, a disgrace to the family. She put on the old French general's spectacles and surveyed me on all sides, after which as an evidence of her satisfaction she indulged herself with a pinch from the late countess's gold snuff-box.

We talked of the old times and of all my old acquaintance and friends. Thus I learned, amongst

other things that my guardian's housekeeper died a few days before, and that the eldest daughter was going to be married. My grandmother's old cat was also dead, as well as the shoemaker who lived in our back-premises, but his widow carried on his business.

A sobbing outside the door announced the approach of poor old Miss Schmied, and with the words "where is the dear child?" she entered, the tears chasing each other down her withered old face.

I had now to relate every particular of my life past, present and future, as it promised to be; nor did we retire till long after midnight.

The next morning I visited, with a strange mixture of feeling, the various places, which during my life here, had been the scenes of enjoyment or pain; the church, for instance, where I first saw my beloved Emma, the school-house and the memorable dwelling of the Reissmehls'.

The doctor's old landlady was overjoyed by a few thalers which I paid her in his name; but I was not able to see his room as it was now quite changed, and very creditably occupied, but the people were out and it was locked up. I stood for a moment in the narrow passage between the two houses, and looked up at the two windows which had been connected by the floating plank; this gloomy, desolate spot had in no way changed its character; heaps of rubbish lay here and there and upper chambers were connected with cords stretched across for drying linen. It seemed to me as if it were yesterday since I was expelled from the grocers; the street-lamp, the top covered with a splendid pile of snow, shewing that it had not been lighted the night before. Neither had anything

apparently changed its character at the Reissmehls'. The old stockfish swung above the door; the old stone-figure stood outside, an icicle now hanging to his nose, and casks of butter and flour stood within, as of old.

I entered the shop, Mr. Phillip, now the principal was sitting in the counting-house on the stool, formerly occupied by Mr. Reissmehl. He was still the same tall, thin, melancholy man. He did not recognise me in the least; I asked for a cigar and he named the various kinds and their prices. When I mentioned my name he looked at me with astonishment, and a smile slowly lit up his melancholy face. He had, apparently no pleasure in again meeting me; he said his wife was absent, nor did he invite me to call again and I soon took my leave.

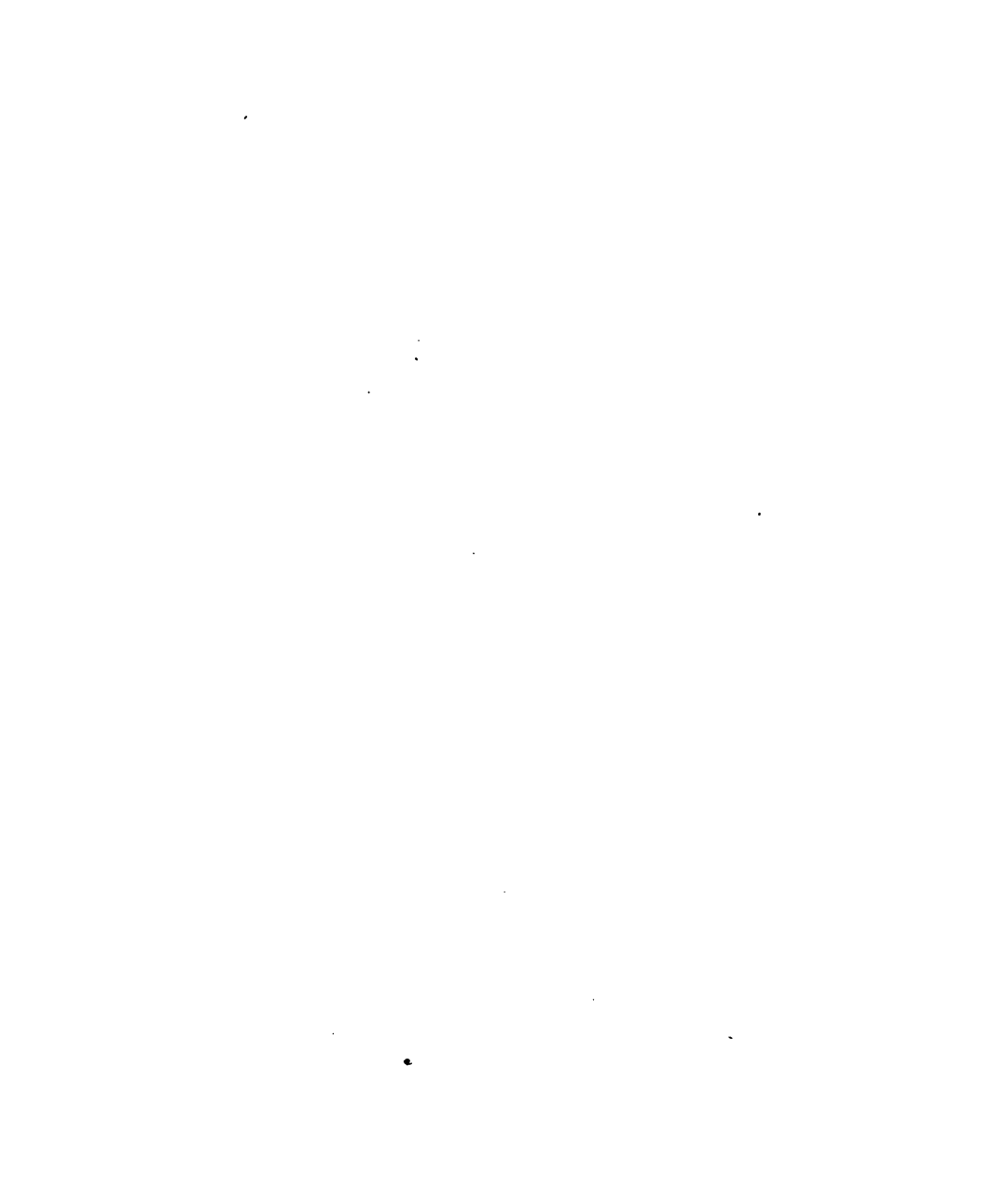
The leave-taking with my grandmother, my aunt and poor Miss Schmied was of the most affectionate and cordial character.

At noon I was again seated in the coupee of the diligence. The four horses trotted merrily away along the frozen roads and thus I took my leave for a time of my native land, as I now do of thee, my friendly reader.

If for the rest thou art interested in knowing the further adventures of my life and whether I returned happily and successfully from my sojourn in the South of France, I will simply tell thee that at this very moment, Emma, my wife, is come into the room. It is evening, the lamp is lit and a good fire is burning and I now add the last words to this history of my life BEHIND THE COUNTER, which has so pleasantly occupied such vacant hours as could be spared from the counting-house and the weighing-room.

THE END.

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